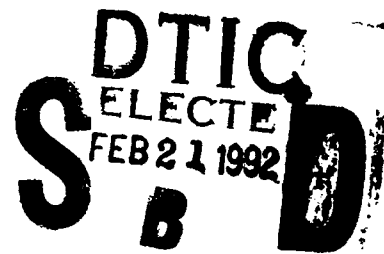


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THESIS

SOVIET ANTILANDING DOCTRINE:
DOES IT MATTER?

by

Michael W. Jordan

December, 1991

Thesis Advisor:

James J. Tritten

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92 2 19 057

92-04346



Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If Applicable) Code NS	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School		
6c. ADDRESS (city, state, and ZIP code) Monterey, CA 93943-5100			7b. ADDRESS (city, state, and ZIP code) Monterey, CA 93943-5100		
8a.	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If Applicable) NS	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER			
8c. ADDRESS (city, state, and ZIP code) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5100			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
					WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) SOVIET ANTILANDING DOCTRINE: DOES IT MATTER?					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Jordan, Michael W.					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Master's Thesis	13b. TIME COVERED FROM Jul 90 TO Dec 91	14. DATE OF REPORT (year, month, day) December 19, 1991	15. PAGE COUNT 115		
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUBGROUP			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) The new national security strategy will have both short and long-range effects on all branches of the military. This requires a close examination of the implications that such dramatic changes could have on the various branches of the military and their ability to respond to the broad spectrum of crises that could occur in today's dynamic political situation. Although the threat from the Soviet Union has diminished and while no one seriously believes that the United States and the Soviet Union will engage in conflict, especially on Soviet soil, the need still exists to examine Soviet doctrine and warfighting capabilities in relation to U.S. capabilities and strategies. We need to study Soviet antilanding doctrine because of the possibility of U.S. forces encountering Soviet-trained enemies or the remote possibility of contingency operations against the USSR in regional/local wars.. Finally, it is necessary for U.S. strategic planners to continuously track Soviet antilanding concepts in the unlikely event of a reconstitution scenario resulting in a big war with the USSR or whatever replaces it.					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL JAMES J. TRITTEN			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (408) 646-2143	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL NS/TR	

DD FORM 1473, 84 MAR

83 APR edition may be used until exhausted

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

All other editions are obsolete

Unclassified

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Soviet Antilanding Defense:
Does It Matter?

by

Michael W. Jordan
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.B.A., University of Texas at El Paso, 1975

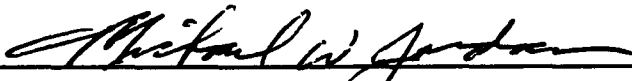
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

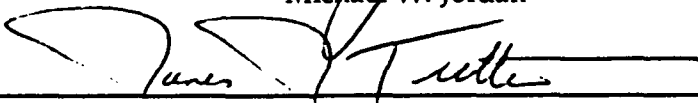
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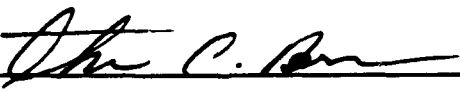
Author:


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ABSTRACT

The new national security strategy will have both short and long-range effects on all branches of the military. This requires a close examination of the implications that such dramatic changes could have on the military and their ability to respond to the broad spectrum of crises that could occur in today's dynamic political situation. Although the threat from the Soviet Union has diminished and while no one seriously believes that the U.S. and the Soviet Union will engage in conflict, especially on Soviet soil, the need still exists to examine Soviet doctrine and warfighting capabilities in relation to U.S. capabilities and strategies. We need to study Soviet antilanding doctrine because of the possibility of U.S. forces encountering Soviet-trained enemies or the remote possibility of contingency operations against the USSR in regional/local wars. Finally, it is necessary for U.S. strategic planners to continuously track Soviet antilanding concepts in the unlikely event of a reconstitution scenario resulting in a big war with the USSR of whatever replaces it.



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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the necessity for the continued study of Soviet defensive doctrine given the recent changes brought about by the new national security strategy. The new national security strategy shifted the focus of U.S. defense effort away from an era of concentrating on a single threat, the Soviet Union. Does this imply that we ignore Soviet military capabilities and political intentions, or should we continue to assess these capabilities and intentions before making any major course changes in our own programs?

The new national security strategy has focused the United States defenses on the ability to provide deterrence, peacetime presence, crisis response, and reconstitution. This propels America's armed forces into a new era that requires the maintenance of a force structure that is both flexible and mobile in nature. This new force structure must also maintain the ability to perform routine presence or respond to crises dependent on the tasking.

The national strategy, to remain credible, requires a force capability applicable across the broad spectrum of conflict which is joint in nature. The Marine Corps has developed a force structure and a concept of operations that

maximizes their warfighting capabilities while still addressing the missions of the new national security strategy and current force level cuts.

Amphibious forces can clearly play a role in this new national security strategy given their inherent flexibility and mobility. Maneuver strategy affords amphibious forces an enhanced ability to respond to crises and conflicts while facing technological advances in weaponry and asymmetrical forces. As such, they can have a significant influence in strategy by virtue of their diversionary capability and can play a large role as a contingency force in this new national security strategy.

The end of the cold war signaled a new era in not only United States military policy, but Soviet Union military policy as well. The political and economic implications of this new Soviet era is shifting the impetus of the Soviet military away from an offensive military strategy and towards a border, including maritime, defense military. The Soviet military commands a formidable coastal defense force that consists of both ground and naval forces and is an integral part of the Soviet military and political "defensive" doctrine.

The first section of this thesis examines the significant effect that the new national security strategy will have on force structure and the associated roles and missions of U.S. military forces. The paper then examines the impact of this

new strategy on the U.S. Marine Corps with it's amphibious force capability and how the Marines are moving to meet this new new strategy.

The next section analyzes the forces and capabilities of the Soviet Union's antilanding defenses. It provides an overview of the type of defense the U.S. could expect from either Soviet or Soviet-trained forces.

The final section contains the assessment of whether the need still exists for continued study of Soviet military policy by strategic planners.

II. AMERICA'S NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

A. INTRODUCTION

The Cold War is over and President Bush has announced a new national security strategy which focuses the Armed Forces on peacetime presence and contingency-type operations.¹ The new national security strategy will have both short and long-range effects on all branches of the military and will require a close examination of the implications that such dramatic changes could have on the various branches of the military and their ability to respond to the broad spectrum of crises that could occur in today's dynamic political situation.

This chapter will examine the effect of the new national security strategy on America's future force structure and the roles and missions of U.S. Marine Corps amphibious forces in contingency operations. Primary attention will be drawn to the ability of amphibious forces to deter aggression, maintain stability, encourage and sustain reform, and to respond to the complete range of scenarios.

¹ "Remarks by the President to the Aspen Institute symposium", Office of the Press Secretary (Aspen, Colorado), The White House, August 2, 1990, 1.

B. ASPEN SPEECH

With President Bush's Aspen Institute speech of August 2, 1990, America began a movement towards a new national strategy requiring a force structure with the ability to provide a regional peacetime presence and contingency response. The current active force structure can expect to be approximately 25 percent smaller by 1995 placing America's armed forces at their lowest level since 1950.

In his speech Bush stated:

"What matters now is how we reshape the forces that remain. Our new strategy must provide the framework to guide our deliberate reductions to no more than the forces we need to guard our enduring interests - the forces to exercise interests - the forces to exercise forward presence in key areas, to respond effectively to crises, to retain the national capacity to rebuild our forces should this be needed. What we need are not merely reductions, but restructuring."²

This force restructuring will require a close eye on our defense policy thought and planning given the velocity with which political situations are changing in the world today. While the Marine Corps/military forces can provide immediate response to many contingencies with little or no warning, the new force structure would require six or more months to respond to another contingency such as "Desert Storm." The United States military must focus on readiness and rapid response with forces which can provide the U.S. with global reach. While conflicts at the strategic level of conflict

² Ibid.

(i.e., World War II) still requires allied support, and operational level conflicts (i.e. Desert Storm) would require host nation support, the tactical level of conflict remains the only unilateral capability maintained by the U.S.

Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney recognizes the continuing importance of maintaining a viable force structure despite the proposed decreases in U.S. forces. In a speech prepared for delivery at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, on March 21, 1991 Secretary Cheney acknowledged the necessity of maintaining traditional strengths such as logistics, control of the sea, command of the air, mobility , and the capability to conduct large armored land assaults as recently demonstrated in Iraq.³

This requires the maintenance of a force structure that is both flexible and mobile in nature with the ability perform routine presence or to respond to crises by reinforcing forward-based units through the concept of sequencing follow-on troops from any branch of the military.

C. A NEW ERA FOR AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES

The Aspen Institute speech provided renewed impetus to the issue about the roles and missions of not only the Marine Corps, but the other branches of the military as well. Prior

³ Remarks by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney at Walsh Lecture at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Thursday, March 21, 1991. Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Release. Washington, D.C.

to "Desert Storm" the debate was heating up between the various branches of the military concerning roles and dollars and among critics in Washington who stated:

"...the Pentagon should review the assignment of missions to the services, largely set four decades ago, with an eye to meeting goals more efficiently."⁴

The role for the military in contingency-type operations and peacetime presence is complicated. It must depend on either host nation support, which risks political problems, MAGTF's, or on lightly equipped troops that can respond more rapidly. But the limited weight of equipment that can be transported by these "light divisions" may not be enough to meet the threat.

In March 1990 a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee was called by Les Aspin, chairman of the panel, to begin debate on "the right mix of forces" for operations in Third World countries.⁵

The Army and Air Force each based their claim to be the U.S. primary force for contingency operations on the speed with which their forces can respond to a crisis and the wide assortment of combat forces that could be employed. General

⁴ Gordon, Michael R. The New York Times. "Pentagon Faces Battle on Reshaping Military for Changing World." May 20, 1990. B12.

⁵ Gordon, Michael R. The New York Times. "Split Between Army and Marines Surfaces in Debate on 3d World." March 15, 1990. B6.

Carl Vuono, the former Army Chief of Staff, stated that future conflicts in the Third World will require:

"...the overwhelming application of combat power. The Army can place substantial combat power on the ground anywhere in the world."⁶

The Marine Corps, on the other hand, argued that the Navy/Marine Corps team provides the U.S. with a flexible and sustainable force and the means to respond to contingencies anywhere in the world utilizing forward deployed and prepositioned assets.

"I think that the Army Contingency Corps that is being advertised as a forcible entry capability is light enough to get there but just light enough to get itself into trouble, said Brig. Gen. Sheehan, USMC. I see less of a need for a contingency corps than the Army would advertise. You are going to need a healthy Army. You don't need the Army building another Marine Corps."⁷

The struggles between the various branches of the military are primarily accomplished by each service promoting itself as the best provider of the conventional forces required in what they foresee as the future defense policy of contingency response. These are legitimate debates and future debates of this type are bound to increase in number and intensity as the different services compete for parts of the shrinking defense budget, but for the time being, a truce has been called

⁶ Ibid., B1.

⁷ Gordon, Michael R. The New York Times. "Army, Facing Cuts, Reported Seeking to Reshape Itself." December 12, 1989. A1.

between the services. As stated by General Carl Mundy, the new Marine Corps commandant:

"The U.S. Army-Marine Corps debate over which force is better suited to quickly respond to world conflicts has ended. Cooperation is the wave of the future."⁸

D. THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The fundamental role of America's armed forces as outlined in the new national security strategy is strategic deterrence, forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution.⁹ While these tenets will remain constant, the force structure and the means by which the U.S. accomplishes these roles is subject to change. This entails the development of a military strategy and force structure that is responsive to the emerging security environment. The global interests and responsibilities maintained by the U.S. as the world's lone superpower will require a military force of wide-ranging capabilities while enduring at least a twenty-five percent cut in the military budget.

In light of the changing threat and the reduction of forces across the board, the U.S. is already reducing those

⁸ Caleb Baker. "New Marine Chief Urges More Ties With Army" in Defense News. September 30, 1991. p. 38.

⁹ The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 1991), p. 25.

forces focused on the Soviet threat.¹⁰ The era of focusing the majority of U.S. defense efforts on a single threat or a single region of the world is no longer considered a viable option. We must carefully, however, still assess both Soviet military capabilities and political intentions before making any major course changes in our own programs. It must be noted that while political intentions can change overnight, force structure, once relinquished, takes much longer to rebuild.

The U.S. historical reliance on the seas for economic and security requirements, coupled with the possibility of conflicts along the littoral, necessitates the development of a strategy that is maritime in nature. As General Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate on 21 February 1991:

"Control of critical sea, air and space lines of communication underwrites our other strategic concepts. Control of these lines is essential to our ability to protect global U.S. interests and to project power, reinforce, resupply, and gain access. Maritime superiority gives us the capability to achieve this control and provides our National Command Authorities with a wide range of options during peace, crisis, or war."¹¹

¹⁰ The terms Soviet and Soviet Union were retained in this thesis pending the adoption of a final political settlement and redesignation.

¹¹ Statement of General Colin L. Powell Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate 21 February 1991. p. 7.

The expected decrease in overseas bases generally (recognizing that new presence is being constructed in the Persian Gulf) coupled with an expected increase in the need for independent action, underscores the need for a strategy that is consistent with our national character and requirements.

As noted by former Marine Corps Commandant General A.M. Gray:

"The decline in overseas bases and the need for vital resources in the third world drives us toward the development of a strategy that is maritime in character."¹²

A modest level of U.S. military presence - principally maritime - will be essential to preserve stability, encourage democracy, and deter aggression.¹³ The presence of these maritime forces will provide a clear message concerning U.S. regional interests and can foster regional stability.

The preservation of a stable world environment through the maintenance of credible military forces and strong alliances will continue to remain crucial to the survival of our Nation and our political and economic well-being. To be credible, the national strategy must be a joint strategy, which requires a force capability applicable across the broad spectrum of conflict. This will require not only forces capable of rapid

¹² Gordon. NYT. "Split Between Army and Marines Surfaces." B1.

¹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1991 Joint Military Net Assessment, March 1991.

response, but the capability of building up forces in theater through the concept of sequencing.

The importance of peacetime measures to deter these regional conflicts, instabilities, and terrorism will certainly expand as U.S. military resources are reduced in accordance with the new national security strategy. The importance of peacetime measures in deterring aggression and defusing crises will inevitably grow as military resources continue to shrink.¹⁴

E. THE U.S. MARINE CORPS AND THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The withdrawal of U.S. forces from forward-deployed regions of the World establishes the need for a means of forward presence. "Forward presence provides visible deterrence, preserves regional stability, and promotes U.S. influence and access."¹⁵ The application of forward presence is no more credible, nor achievable, than with the U.S. Navy/Marine Corps team with their inherent mobility and flexibility to respond to various crises.

Forward-deployed naval forces are particularly well-suited for limiting the expansion of a crisis and facilitating a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Statement of General Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, Washington, DC, 21 February 1991," As delivered, 19 pp.

return to normalcy. They can move into position rapidly and in strength without violating territorial borders or raising national sensitivities over territorial sovereignty. If the situation warrants, Navy and Marine forces, in concert with those of allies can apply appropriate force to protect our common interests. Once the crisis is resolved, naval forces can be withdrawn unilaterally without giving the appearance of retreat. As stated by LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, USMC(Ret):

"...maritime forces constitute an in-being capability that is ideal for deterrence, crisis control, or forceful action ... it is only with amphibious forces that presence can be established ashore."¹⁶

The unique demands of this new national security strategy require that the Navy/Marine Corps team be innovative in their approach while placing an emphasis on conventional presence and crisis response. The key aspects of the Navy/Marine Corps revised strategy must be readiness, presence, mobility, sustainability, and the concept of sequencing not only Marines, but Army and Air Force follow-on forces as well.

The U.S. Marine Corps amphibious forces maintain the ability to be "in area" during a crisis to inhibit possible escalation of hostilities. If the situation deteriorates amphibious forces can act decisively to deter further escalation and failing all else they can provide a "foothold" for the sequencing of follow-on forces if the situation

¹⁶ Trainor, Bernard E. "A Force 'Employment' Capability" in Marine Corps Gazette. May 1990. p. 30.

results in a major confrontation requiring a greater American response. Sequencing provides the National Command Authority with the capability to respond to crises with a small, capable force and, if the situation necessitates, maintain the ability to secure air bases, ports, or safe zones for the augmentation of heavier follow-on forces as illustrated in the scenario section of this chapter. As Brigadier General Charles E. Wilhelm, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Missions and Applications for the Marine Corps stated:

"As far as forcible entry, sustainability and independence from forward bases, naval forces have far, far greater utility than the contingency forces that I am reading about."¹⁷

F. CONCLUSIONS

Amphibious warfare is probably the most complex of all warfare areas, encompassing land, air, surface and sub-surface elements. The amphibious force is important instrument of policy, both politically and militarily, and at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. By virtue of the mobility, flexibility and versatility, organic to amphibious forces and with the ability to launch a tactical/operational landing force and maneuver from the seaward flank, it is a vital component of our maritime capability and national security strategy. It can cover and respond to the complete range of

¹⁷ Gordon, Michael R. The New York Times. "Army, Facing Cuts, Reported Seeking to Reshape Itself." December 12, 1989. A1.

scenarios from forward presence to crisis response and finally to sustained conflict. It is often the best, and sometimes the only, way of responding with military force to an unstable or potentially unstable situation.

While many people have asserted that amphibious operations are a thing of the past, the fact remains that this type of operation can achieve objectives at the operational and tactical levels of war and possibly at the strategic level with the assets of our allies.

Although Marines maintain an ability at the tactical and operational level to conduct forcible-entry operations from the sea, naval expeditionary forces provide not only the capability needed to rapidly shift from crisis influence to crisis intervention, but also the means to enable the introduction of sustainable follow-on forces. Amphibious operations as a means of maneuver allow U.S. forces to seize and maintain the initiative by taking the fight to the enemy at a time and place of their choosing.

It also can not be overlooked that the threat of amphibious operations also can cause our adversary to deploy forces in a manner that leaves him vulnerable in other locations and to other types of military operations as evidenced in Operation Desert Storm where the Iraqis employed 11 divisions in defense of the coast from the threat of only 18,000 U.S. Marines.

President Bush summarized his speech to the Aspen Institute by stating:

"All of us know the challenges we face are fiscal, as well as military. The budget constraints we face are very real, but so, too, is the need to protect the gains that 40 years of peace through strength have earned us. The simple fact is this: When it comes to national security, America can never afford to fail or fall short."¹⁸

With the inability to predict Soviet reaction to internal and external change, the U.S. must maintain a credible conventional capability to deter aggression, maintain stability, encourage and sustain reform, and respond to crises resulting from unforeseen circumstances not only in Europe, but throughout the World.

The question must be asked do we plan for intentions or for capabilities, and for what threat. To maintain a credible military the U.S. must not be so nearsighted as to ignore the significant force and advisory potential maintained by the Soviets. This paper, while not attempting to focus strictly on a Soviet threat, seeks to examine one aspect of the U.S. force structure's capability to respond to contingencies by examining the potential for Marine Corps amphibious forces to exploit the coastal defense forces of the Soviet Union.

¹⁸ "Remarks by the President to the Aspen Institute Symposium" p. 3.

II. THE U.S. MARINE CORPS

Military doctrine and theory is evolutionary and constantly undergoing change to accommodate new ideas or technology, or to counter changing threats. It is therefore not surprising to find or expect significant modifications to military doctrine and theory in view of the President's Aspen speech.

The advocacy of maneuver philosophy in Marine Corps doctrine when combined with the concept of sequencing provides a means of accomplishing the new national security strategy of deterrence, forward presence, crisis response and reconstitution while complying with current force cuts. The ability of Marine Corps planners to adapt to the policy of joint force contingency operations in recognition of the emerging force structures and force strengths will allow the Marine Corps to move into this new era as the vanguard of America's new National Security Strategy.

This chapter will examine the force structure of the Marine Corps, their missions, a brief examination of possible scenarios, and the Marine Air-Ground Task Force concept of operations. It will then briefly peruse the concepts of "maneuver" and "attrition" styles of warfare. The primary focus of this chapter will be the Marine Corps amphibious

capability as an intervention force to provide a balanced force of combined arms in a variety of crisis situations in accordance with the new national security strategy.

A. FORCE STRUCTURE

There is no precise model to optimize force structure. Forces must be multimission, mobile, flexible, and capable of the precise and discriminate application of military force. The Marine Corps has developed a force structure that maximizes their fighting capabilities while still addressing the current force level cuts, the concept of sequencing, and the new national security strategy.

Marine operational forces are organized into Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) under the command of a single commander from the various combat, combat support, and combat service support organizations of the Marine Corps. They are task-organized based on a particular mission consisting of three basic types of standing MAGTF's that may be formed in response to operational requirements: MEF, MEB, and MEU.

1. MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (MEF)

The Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) is the largest and most powerful of the MAGTF's. The MEF is normally built around a Marine division, aircraft wing, force service support group, and a surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence group involving approximately 45,000 troops. The Ground Combat Element (GCE) of the MEF will normally include a Marine

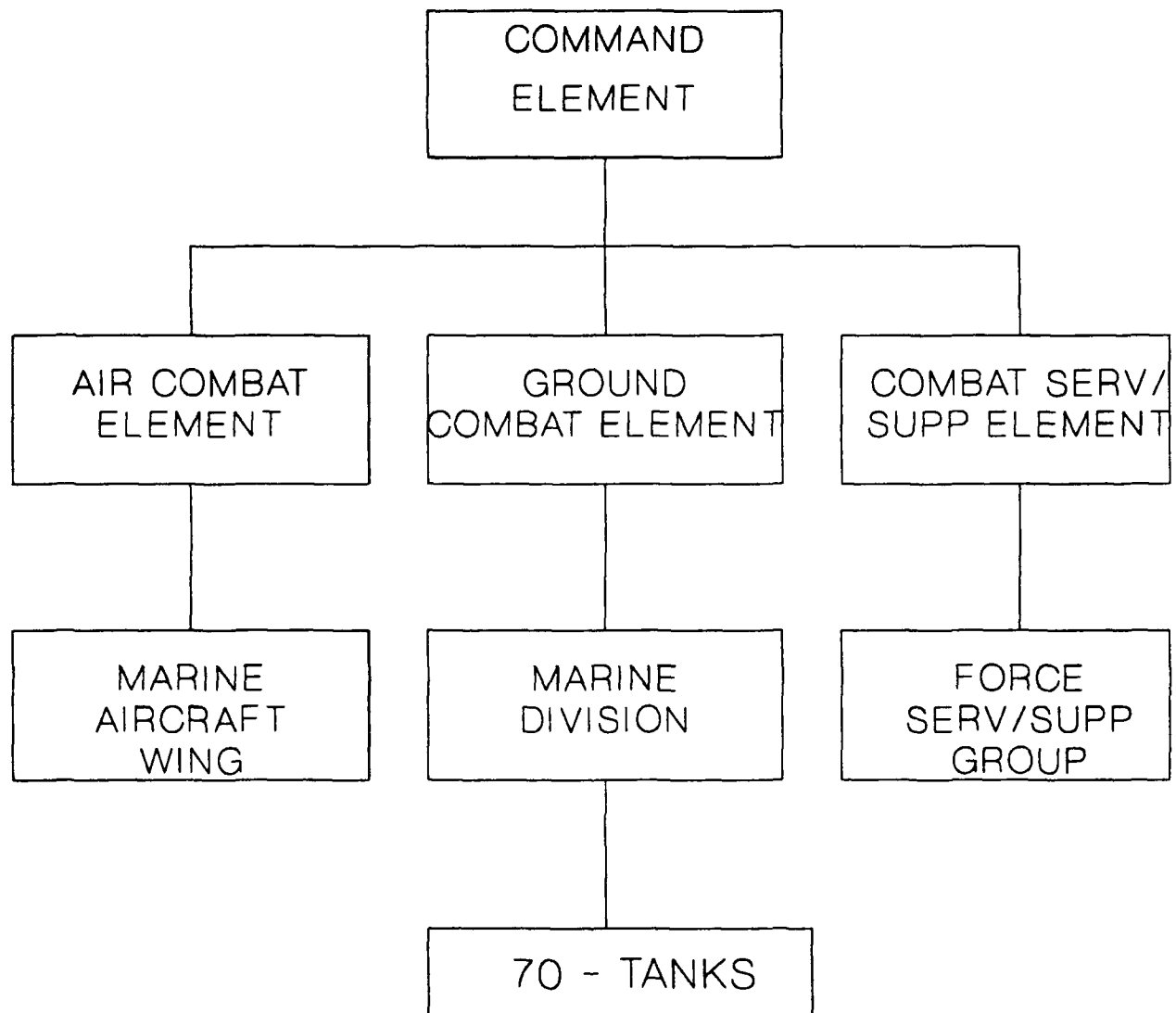
division which is composed of three infantry regiments, an artillery regiment, an assault amphibian battalion, a combat engineer battalion, a light armored infantry battalion, a reconnaissance battalion and a tank battalion consisting seventy tanks. The Aviation Combat Element is normally a Marine aircraft wing consisting of fixed-wing/rotary-wing aircraft, antiair warfare units, air command and control elements, Marine wing support group, and may include resources from other aircraft wings for added combat power. The MEF is capable of conducting a wide range of significant sustained operations including forcible entry with 60 days of support.¹⁹ An example of the use of a MEF-sized force in a wartime scenario could be equated to the force used at Inchon where the Marine amphibious forces were tasked with seizing the port of Inchon, the Kimpo airfield, and the city of Seoul and, in a "joint" operation with the Eighth Army, conducted a pincher movement to destroy Communist forces.²⁰ The current goal of the Marine Corps force structure is to support three Marine Expeditionary Forces. (FIGURE 1)

¹⁹ Marine Air-Ground Task Force Presentation Team Pocket Guide. The U.S. Marine Corps MAGTF Warfighting Presentation Team. MCCDC, Quantico, VA. 1 October 1990.

²⁰ Heinl, Robert D. "Inchon, 1950." in Assault from the Sea. Merrill L. Bartlett editor, Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press. 1983. p. 350.

FIGURE 1

U.S. MARINE CORPS
MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



APPROXIMATE PERSONNEL: 45,000

SOURCE: MAGTF POCKET GUIDE

2. MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE (MEB)

The Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) is an Assault Echelon (AE) of approximately 14,800 troops normally embarked aboard Navy amphibious ships capable of amphibious operations and subsequent operations ashore. A MEB-sized force was employed during Operation Desert Storm where they conducted feints along the Kuwaiti coastline and augmented ground forces. The MEB Ground Combat Element is built around a reinforced regiment consisting of two to five infantry battalions, an artillery battalion reinforced, an assault amphibian company, a combat engineer company, a light armored infantry company, a reconnaissance company, a tank company consisting of 17 tanks, and a TOW platoon. The Aviation Combat Element is a composite Marine aircraft group consisting of fixed-wing aircraft, rotary-wing aircraft, command, control, and antiair warfare elements, and a Marine Wing Support Group (MWSG) detachment. It also consists of a Brigade Service Support Group (BSSG) capable of supporting the MEB in combat for 30 days without resupply. During potential crisis situations, a MEB, the smallest unit capable of forcible entry, may be forward deployed aboard ships for an extended period to provide rapid response. While the MEB can be supported from its sea base, facilities ashore or a combination of both for 30 days, for sustained combat, a

larger force is required.²¹ The MEB also has an assault follow-on-echelon (AFOE) which may be embarked on commercial ships. The current programming goal for amphibious ships for the U.S. Marine Corps is assault echelons for two and one half MEB's i.e., one per coast plus training. (FIGURE 2)

3. MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT/SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE

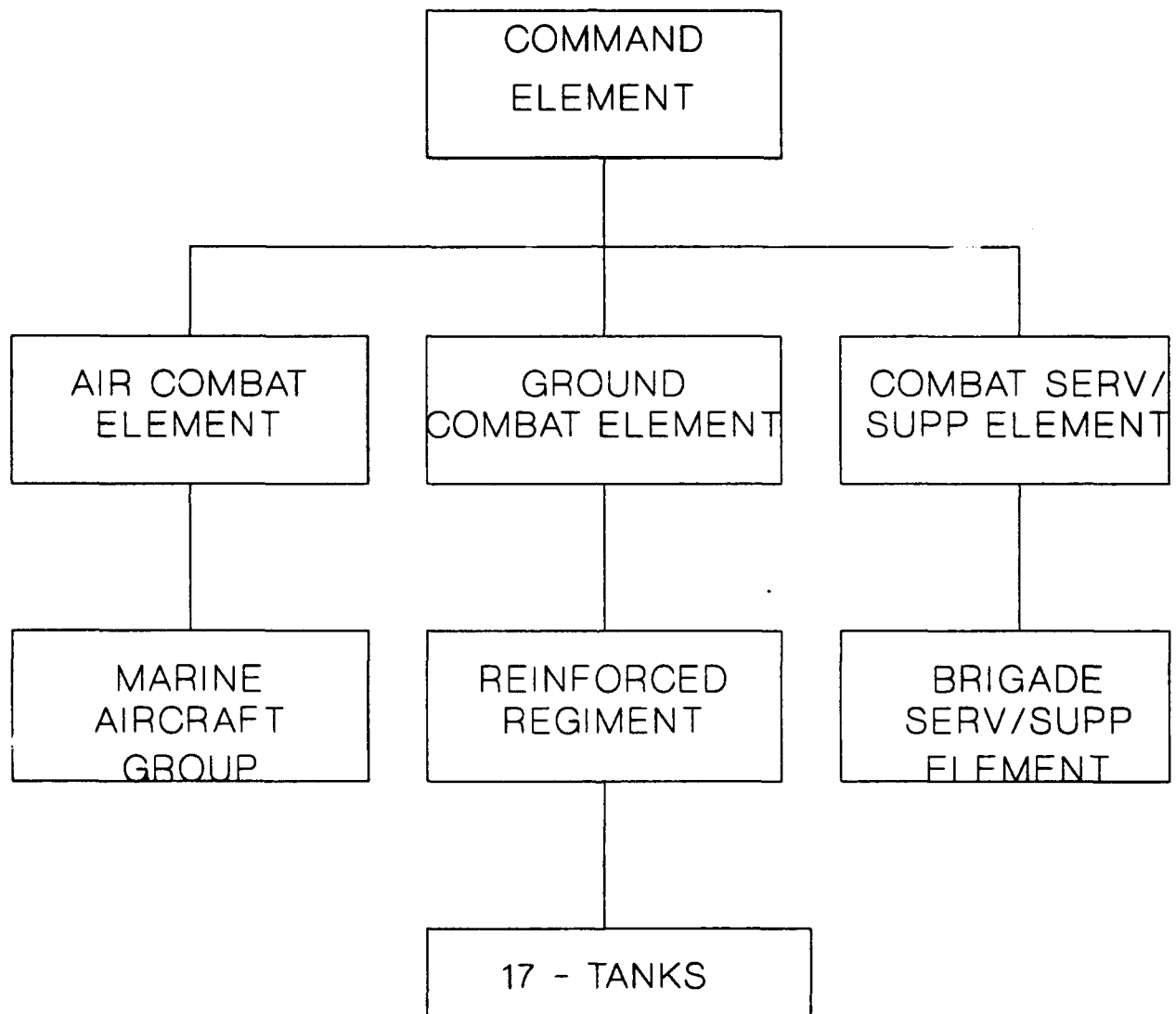
The Marine Expeditionary Unit/Special Operations Capable (MEU/SOC) is the smallest forward-deployed MAGTF. It is normally composed of a composite aircraft squadron, a reinforced infantry battalion without tank support, a MEU service support group (MSSG), and consists of approximately 2,350 troops. The MEU/SOC is considered the most responsive MAGTF and may be designated as the forward echelon of a MEB since it is sea-based and continuously deployed. The MEU/SOC deploys with 15 days of sustainment and, while it is not considered capable of forced entry operations, it is capable of conducting amphibious operations of limited scope or provide an immediate reaction capability for relatively limited combat operations. The MEU/SOC conducted a valuable mission during Operation Desert Storm through their maritime intervention role and the securing of Iraqi island outposts. The MEU/SOC contains a GCE composed of a reinforced infantry battalion including an artillery battery, an assault amphibian platoon, a combat engineer platoon, a detachment, light

²¹ Ibid.

FIGURE 2

U.S. MARINE CORPS

MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE



APPROXIMATE PERSONNEL: 14,800

SOURCE: MAGTF POCKET GUIDE

armored infantry battalion, a reconnaissance platoon, and an antitank section. The ACE of the MEU/SOC is composed of a composite squadron including detachments from a medium helicopter squadron, heavy helicopter squadron (HMH), light attack helicopter squadron (HMLA), Harrier-V/STOL attack squadron (VMA), aerial refueler transport squadron (VMGR), air control group (MACG), and a Marine observation squadron. The MEU/SOC also contains a combat service support element capable of providing the full spectrum of combat service support capabilities.²² The current goal of the new national security strategy is only two forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units/Special Operations Capable at any one time. (FIGURE 3)

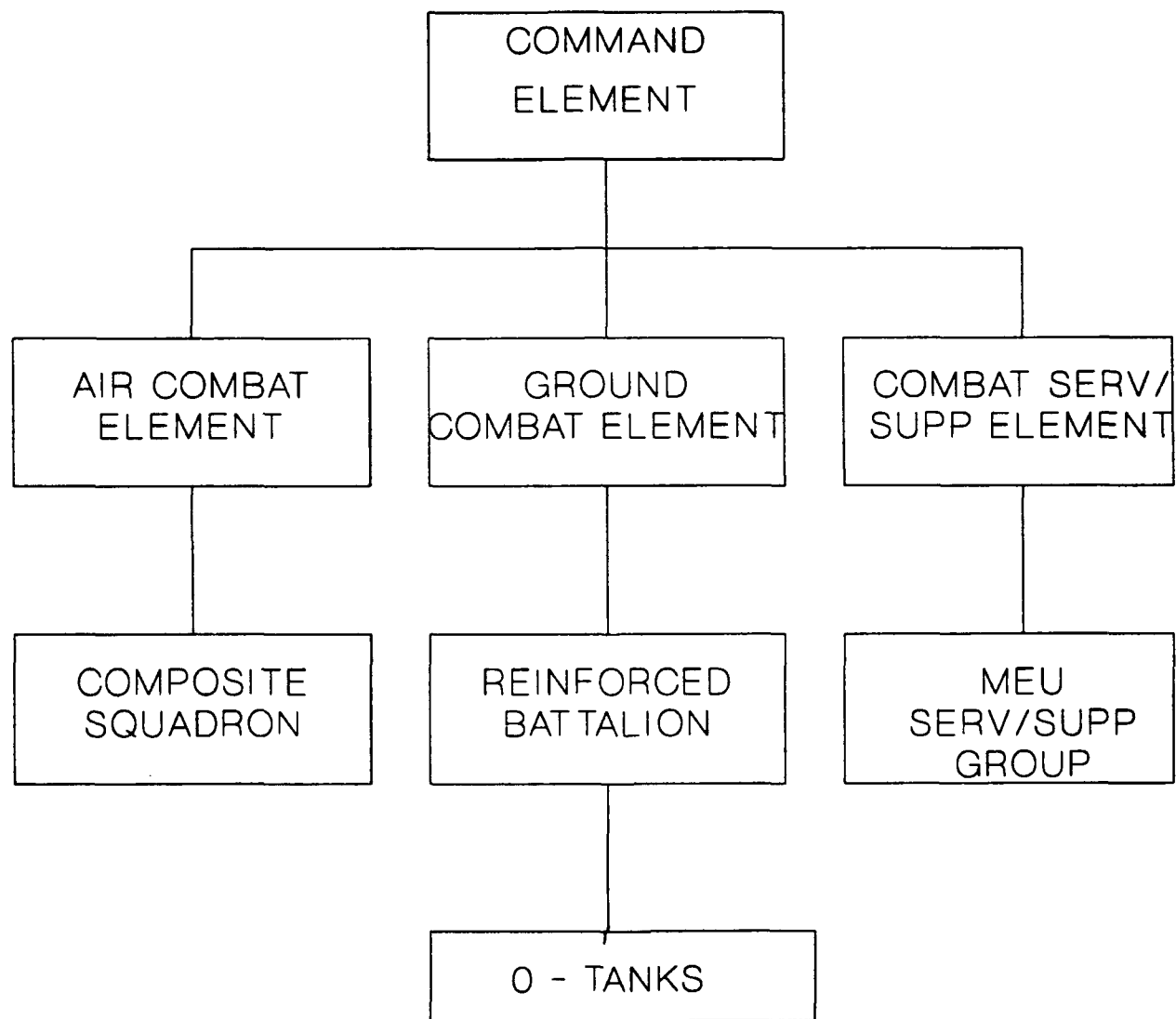
4. SCENARIOS

Amphibious forces can clearly play a role in the new national security strategy given their inherent flexibility and mobility. They can attain goals at the tactical level of war, at the operational level of war with host nation support, and at the strategic level of war given the benefit of allied support. This paper, for consistency purposes, uses the Soviet definitions for strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war.

²² Ibid.

FIGURE 3

U.S. MARINE CORPS
MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT



APPROXIMATE PERSONNEL: 2,350

SOURCE: MAGTF POCKET GUIDE

The Soviet Union will remain as the strongest military force on the Eurasian landmass.²³ While the U.S. must maintain the conventional capability to globally counterbalance these forces, conventional war planners will focus their efforts on the regional contingencies outlined in the 1991 Joint Military Net Assessment.

It is necessary to examine possible scenarios that could occur in the world involving the Soviet Union, Soviet-trained forces, or Third World forces and the role that the Marine amphibious forces would play in the conflict. This section will provide three possible scenarios, not to be construed as predictive, where amphibious forces could contribute an active and influential role in the new national security strategy.

a. SCENARIO 1

The most likely scenario for Marine amphibious forces in today's modern battlefield and in light of recent force level cuts would be in a crisis response or crisis intervention role against perhaps Soviet-trained forces in the Third World or Middle East, etc.

The amphibious forces of the U.S. Marine Corps were some of the first American forces to respond to the Iraqi/Kuwait crisis and arrive in theater. The rapid response of the Marine Amphibious Readiness Group (MARG) enabled U.S.

²³ 1991 Joint Military Net Assessment p. 1-3.

forces to receive advance reconnaissance and intelligence prior to the conflict, an important mission in today's modern battlefield.

The ability of amphibious forces to conduct non-hostile evacuation operations (NEO) in areas of crisis is also important and was performed by a Marine amphibious ready group during the Iraq/Kuwait crisis.

While attention was focused on the invasion and eventual liberation of Kuwait, Navy and Marine Corps units evacuated civilians from two other hot spots on opposite coasts of Africa.

The capability of amphibious forces to secure access to critical landmasses is essential in crisis response. The Marines ability to provide this mission was demonstrated during Desert Storm when the embarked Marines from the Marine Expeditionary Unit/Special Operations Capable (MEU/SOC) assaulted the tiny Kuwaiti island Umm al Maradim 12 miles off the Kuwaiti coast using embarked helicopters, securing a Iraqi outpost.

Once a crisis has escalated to conflict the amphibious capabilities of a Marine Expeditionary Unit sized amphibious task force maintains the ability to secure an area for the sequencing of follow-on troops.

b. SCENARIO 2

Another likely crisis response for which the Marine Corps amphibious forces would respond would be one like that witnessed in Operation Desert Storm. A large crisis such as Operation Desert Storm against Soviet trained forces is not only possible, but probable given the large number of countries with whom the Soviets have provided both technical and military advice.

The U.S. Marine Corps, as part of their total employment of troops, deployed an amphibious task force of nearly 18,000 Marines, the largest amphibious force deployment since World War II. This provided a formidable force that the Iraqis had to not only acknowledge but prepare for in defense of their maritime flank.

The Iraqis dedicated eleven divisions, totaling some 80,000 troops in preparation for an amphibious assault by 18,000 U.S. Marines that was to never come. They were also forced to garrison troops on Bubiyan and Faylaka Islands, both of which commanded key sea approaches to vital areas. The various feints and raids conducted by the amphibious forces allowed U.S. ground forces to conduct an end-run of Iraqi forces while the Iraqis prepared for the inevitable assault from the sea. This is the essence of maneuver warfare.

The defensive formation of the Iraqis was remarkably similar to Soviet coastal defense strategy. They utilized mine fields in conjunction with extensive use of

obstacles. Iraqi forces established six mine fields with an additional four mine lines with a total of over 1200 mines to prevent an amphibious assault. They also employed the extensive and coordinated use of barbed wire, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, waterborne obstacles, and beachhead barriers.

The Iraqis additionally utilized the Soviet technique of employing a combat guard or outpost of Iraqi soldiers on islands and oil-drilling platforms with vital accesses to the Iraqi shore and employed anti-ship missiles installations along the coast. While the U.S. delayed conflict initiation until sufficient forces could be established in theater, the Iraqis were able to prepare significant coastal defenses forces due to this delay.

The major disparity between the Iraqis defensive stance and a Soviet defensive stance was the obvious lack of air and sea forces in support of the ground defenses. provided no air superiority. The U.S. capability to maintain air and sea control would have provided sufficient gunfire support to effectively destroy any resistance to the landing.

Despite U.S air and sea supremacy, the significant use of mines and landing beach obstacles presented enough of a deterrent to necessitate an over-the-horizon capability.

c. SCENARIO 3

The least likely scenario for U.S. Marine intervention forces would be an amphibious assault conducted in conjunction with a major European-centered global war against the Soviet Union. The new national security strategy and the associated Base Force are designed to meet contingency type responses instead. The old European-centered global war involving the USSR is assumed to involve a two-year warning and would allow the reconstitution of U.S. forces.

Despite this concept for reconstitution and allied support in a European-centered global war effort, amphibious forces could play an operational or tactical role in a regional or other local war with the Soviet Union. These types of contingency operations still are contained in our new planning scenarios. If these types of operations are possible, we must realize the large coastline associated with Russian territory that must be protected by them in any local war.

The U.S. Marine Corps also can protect the maritime flanks of U.S. ground troops and secure strategically important chokepoints. This also substantiates the need for amphibious forces.

The ability to conduct amphibious operations against a power like the Soviet Union would also require Carrier Battle Group support of the Amphibious Task Force. The coastal defense capabilities of the Soviet Navy would

necessitate that the U.S. maintain not only air superiority but sea superiority as well in the immediate vicinity of the amphibious objective area.

As stated by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney in the 1991 Joint Military Net Assessment:

"...the Soviet military will remain by a wide margin, the largest armed force on the continent...the Soviet ability to project conventional power beyond its borders will continue to decline...there is enormous uncertainty about developments inside the Soviet Union and adjacent areas, and this should be reflected in our planning."²⁴

5. MISSIONS

While the focus of this paper is on the amphibious assault capability of the U.S. Marine Corps to respond to crisis situations through the conduct of missions such as amphibious raids, it must be noted that the Marines are not committed to a strictly amphibious concept. The Marine Corps views on amphibious warfare are evidenced through somewhat subtle changes such as the change from Marine Amphibious Forces to Marine Expeditionary Forces and the term amphibious warfare was mentioned only once in FMFM 1 Warfighting, the new Marine Corps doctrine. The not so subtle changes evidenced are the Maritime Prepositioned Ships (MPS) Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) option and the new national security strategy with a Base Force Amphibious Force

²⁴ Ibid.

programming goal of two and one half MEB assault echelons, down from one and one half Marine Expeditionary Force.

The Marine Corps is dedicated to the amphibious assault concept only if the mission requires it. The flexibility of the Marine Corps to respond to different missions with different forces promotes the Marines as a leading force for special operations, both to act as a forward presence and for crisis response, as demonstrated in Lebanon, Vietnam, Grenada, and most recently Iraq.

The current operational doctrine of the Marine Corps envisions the concept of "sequencing." Sequencing entails the use of forward deployed forces for deterrence, stability and readiness for crisis response. In times of crisis, Marine forces have the potential to be the first forces to respond or arrive at the scene. While this may not be the case in all situations, it can promote the Marine Corps as a leading element in sequencing through their ability of the MEU/SOC, the forward element of the MEB, to secure airbases and seaports providing a means for the augmentation of forces in theater by airborne and other contingency forces. If the crisis escalates, the Marine Corps maintains the capability of forcible entry through the employment of the MEB assault echelon. This chapter will only deal with the amphibious capability of the U.S. Marine Corps, not the Maritime Prepositioned Ships.

The United States maintains political and economic interests scattered throughout the world necessitating a force structure capable of performing a variety of missions both on land and at sea. The U.S. Marine Corps in its attempt to maintain its strategic role as a rapid deployment force, has not fixated itself on a particular mission. Despite certain doctrinal and operational evolution, the Marines with a forward looking and flexible nature, will continue to be the vanguard of crisis response well into the future.

6. THE MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE CONCEPT OF AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS

The ability to combine forward-deployed forces, rapidly-deployable air-lift-configured MAGTFs using prepositioned combat equipment and supplies, and amphibious MAGTFs is a crisis response capability that is uniquely Marine.

In a sustained conflict, the Marines would fight in some combination of MEF's and MEB's and if the conflict escalated, would be dependant on the sequencing of additional forces. MEU/SOC's by their nature of being forward deployed in a peacetime presence role, can through crisis response provide an extremely useful tool in the concept of sequencing. They can secure selected facilities and key terrain ashore, thereby expediting the reinforcement of follow-on forces and saving valuable facilities, such as ports and airfields.

The adoption of the concept of special operations capable forces for the Marine Expeditionary Units is based upon the expeditionary and amphibious nature of the Marine Corps and merely enhances the traditional organization of the Marines afloat. The MEU/SOC is viewed as complementing special forces and should not be construed as a replacement for other special operations forces. Being special operations capable enables the Marines to tailor a MAGTF capable of employment in either a conventional amphibious/expeditionary roles or in the execution of a maritime special operations missions.

A credible expeditionary and amphibious force must possess a maritime special operations capability to be successful in the modern battlefield and specifically in maneuver warfare. Advance force operations and preassault operations, such as intelligence gathering and destruction of antiship or antiair missile sites, are special operations in and of themselves.

This Special Operations Capability enhancement of the MAGTF allows the Marines to apply their amphibious and expeditionary expertise in an increasingly unstable world. It adapts the unique maritime and expeditionary role of the Marine Corps to national defense policies and highlights the effectiveness of a forward deployed, ship-based, force-in-readiness capability in a rapidly changing national security environment.

While MEB-sized MAGTFs are roughly equivalent to an Army light division with regard to armor and firepower, the thirty day sustainment of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade obviously makes this force have more flexibility than a light division with three to four days sustainment. It should also be noted that a Marine Expeditionary Brigade contains organic aircraft. Therefore, the Marine Corps seeks to defeat a numerically superior force through joint forces and combined-arms utilizing both maneuver strategy and sequencing. The unmatched staying power of the Marine Corps due to their inherent sea-based sustainability enables the MAGTF to remain in a crisis region to promote deterrence or conduct limited combat missions in support of the build-up of follow-on forces. This is a mission that is truly to the Marine Corps.

The Marines Corps force structure provides the flexibility and capability to react to crisis response or to conduct a forcible entry from the sea utilizing a combined arms in an integrated, mission-specific, self-sustaining force. No other power projection force possesses such a diverse number of capabilities as maintained in a Marine Air-Ground Task Force. The flexibility, combat power and unequaled sustainability of the MAGTF combined with its many assets affords the Marine Corps a versatility that is capable of operating in a fluid and uncertain environment.

B. THE CONCEPT OF MANEUVER

Maneuver warfare has become the official doctrine of the U.S. Marine Corps which necessitates the understanding of the basic concepts underlying this doctrine. If maneuver warfare is equated to simple movement the practical applications of the maneuver philosophy cannot be fully appreciated.

There exist two distinct styles of warfare: an attrition style which is based on firepower, and a maneuver style which is based on movement.

1. ATTRITION WARFARE

Warfare by "attrition" as identified with the "Battle of the Atlantic" and the "Battle of Britain" is a more scientific approach to war pitting strength against strength to ultimately achieve victory through the cumulative destruction of the enemy's material assets by superior firepower and technology. The inherent need for both volume and accuracy of fire requires centralized control. The success of attrition warfare is dependant upon the ability to withstand attrition of friendly forces. This translates into numerical superiority, a asset which no longer enjoyed with the currently instituted force reductions. Victory in attrition warfare does not depend so much on military competence as on sheer numerical superiority of men and equipment.

2. MANEUVER WARFARE

Warfare by "maneuver" which was best demonstrated in "Desert Storm" strives to attack an enemy from a position of advantage rather than driving into "the teeth" of the opposition. The concept of maneuver strategy is not a new to warfare or to the U.S. Marines. As defined by Joint Publication 1-02, Maneuver is the:

"employment of forces on the battlefield through movement in combination with fire, or fire potential, to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy to accomplish the mission."²⁵

It pits strength against selected enemy weaknesses utilizing both speed and surprise while avoiding an opponenets strengths. The desire for speed requires decentralized control placing a greater demand on military judgement and initiative to identify and exploit enemy weaknesses and tactical opportunities. These concepts require military forces to maintain the initiative by acting more quickly than the enemy can react, maintaining a high tempo of operations.

The United States has long enjoyed vast numerical and technological superiority and has traditionally, although not always, waged war by attrition. However, the Marine Corps concept for winning on today's modern battlefield is a philosophy based on rapid, flexible, and opportunistic maneuver.

²⁵ As quoted in "Understanding Maneuver as the Basis for a Doctrine" by Capt. John F. Schmitt. Marine Corps Gazette. August 1990. p. 91.

Maneuver warfare is comprised of a variety of styles and methods, limited only by the imagination and the restrictions of the given conflict. It relies on the intelligent use of force rather than brute strength to gain the objective economically. It applies not only at the tactical level but also at the operational and strategic levels and in many dimensions, not just spatial. The traditional understanding of maneuver has been the maneuver in space to gain a positional advantage. To maximize the usefulness of maneuver, however, planners must consider maneuver not only as spatial, but in time as well. It is through maneuver in both dimensions that an numerically inferior force can achieve decisive superiority at the necessary time and place.

Maneuver warfare can not be defined in a single act or even as a doctrine. It is manifest as a philosophy, a state of mind, and a mental approach to a conflict. Maneuver warfare avoids rules and patterns and exploits enemy vulnerabilities through the use of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions. It seeks the advantage through the application of superior combat power against an enemy's weakness. As stated in FMFM-1:

"Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent

and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope.²⁶

The future amphibious operation will likely encounter an enemy who possesses a superior armored and mechanized capability. The modern Amphibious Task Force will have to employ superior combined arms and maneuver skills in order to overcome this threat.

C. AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS

Marine Corps MEB- and MEU-sized amphibious forces in the forward presence and crisis response role can be crucial in limited operations such as ensuring the control and continued safe use of the high seas and contiguous land areas during crisis response. The seizure of key terrain can facilitate the control of critical choke points by denying the enemy the freedom to reinforce or deploy forces or to threaten friendly flanks. Amphibious forces can also contribute to joint operations through joint force sequencing in response to national needs.

The forward peacetime presence of amphibious forces with their deployed Marine Expeditionary Units/Special Operations Capable in the Mediterranean and Pacific/Indian oceans serves as a visible and credible indicator of American capability to react to sudden, unforeseen crises involving U.S. interests.

²⁶ FMFM 1 Warfighting. Department of the Navy. Washington, D.C. 6 March 1989.

These units possess a combined ground/air combat capability which can provide a readily available military presence, to deter or respond to a crisis before it has a chance to spread. The deterrence effect of a MEB-sized amphibious force off the coast of politically unstable country can not be overlooked.

Another essential element of contingency response and forward presence that must be considered is forcible entry. The U.S. must have the capability to insert forces into an area regardless of local attitude or opposition if we are to maintain a credible conventional deterrent.

Political constraints and the inability to achieve either local naval and air superiority over an extended period can preclude a prolonged engagement on foreign soil. This requires a force capable of a swift armed incursion or forced entry and equally capable of a rapid retraction of forces if necessary.

In such an environment, the amphibious forces can provide a discriminating use of force that can have a disproportionate value compared to its relatively small size. During "Desert Storm" the U.S. Marine Corps deployed an amphibious task force of nearly 18,000 Marines, the largest amphibious force deployment since the Korean War, to which the Iraqis dedicated eleven divisions, totaling some 80,000 troops in preparation for an amphibious assault that was to never come. The Iraqis were also forced to garrison troops on Bubiyan and Faylaka

Islands, both of which commanded key sea approaches to vital areas.

The various feints and raids conducted by the amphibious forces allowed U.S. ground forces to conduct an end-run of Iraqi forces while the Iraqis prepared for the inevitable assault from the sea. This is the essence of amphibious and maneuver warfare.

Amphibious forces can freely move, land, and support themselves logistically virtually anywhere in the world's littoral without benefit of harbors, ports, or facilities and can also be stationed over-the-horizon at sea requiring no basing or overflight clearances. Should the landing area be hostile, MEB-sized amphibious forces can overcome the opposition and force their way ashore.

Since all of the assets necessary to conduct a forcible entry are organic to most MAGTFs, the planning and execution of forced entry operations can be accomplished in a relatively short time. It is this forcible entry capability that offers a diversity of employment options to planners in crises response.

The importance of an amphibious forcible entry capability and its role in national strategy cannot be overemphasized as described by Liddell Hart:

"The history of warfare shows that the basic strategic asset of sea-based peoples is amphibious flexibility. In tackling land-based opponents, they can produce a distraction to the enemy's power of concentration that

is advantageously disproportionate to the scale of force they employ and the resources they possess."²⁷

This does not, however apply to all levels of warfare. A forcible entry at the strategic level (a major war such as World War II) would require the addition of allied forces. A forcible entry at the operational level (campaign sized similar to Operation Desert Storm) assumes host nation support as outlined in the 1991 Joint Military Net Assessment. Finally, at the tactical level (similar to the invasion of Grenada or Panama), a forcible entry capability is necessary not only for crisis response, but as a deterrent in a forward presence capable force.

Amphibious operations provide one of only two means of forcible entry currently maintained by the U.S. force structure with airborne operations being the only other forced entry capability. The amphibious operation has consistently proven its viability not only in WW II and Korea, but also in Vietnam when it was used on some 60 occasions to provide flanking and blocking maneuvers, again in the lesser sea-launched efforts to evacuate Saigon and Phnom Penh, and in the Falklands War.²⁸

An additional asset of the Marine Corps is the capability to conduct amphibious special operations. Amphibious raids

²⁷ Hart, B.H. Liddell, "Marines and Strategy" in Marine Corps Gazette. May 1990, pp. 18-25.

²⁸ Evans, M. H. H., Amphibious Operations: The Projection of Sea Power Ashore.

and other special naval missions such as reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, diversions have always been a part of Marine Corps strategy. Raids can force an enemy to disperse his forces, divert his attention, or deny use of vital facilities, equipment, or an area. The ability of Marine forces to conduct amphibious special operations is crucial in an increasingly unstable world where deterrence can be accomplished through auspicious intelligence and rapid response.

Amphibious operations should maintain an integral part of any maritime strategy especially with it's ability of exploiting sea control. Amphibious assaults can have a significant influence in strategy by virtue of their diversionary capability and can play a large role as a contingency force in the new national security strategy. The flexibility of amphibious warfare can be demonstrated through the ability of maritime forces to marry with land forces through the concept of sequencing, pre-positioning, or airlift capabilities can provide a continuous buildup of forces in theater in times of conflict.

Maneuver strategy affords amphibious forces an enhanced ability to respond to crises and conflicts while facing technological advances in weaponry and asymmetrical forces. The use of maneuver to overcome superior numbers and smart weapons can be achieved through tactical surprise, dispersed landings, and rapid response.

The modern battlefield commander can no longer depend on strength alone to achieve victory. The current force reductions in the U.S. military will render attrition warfare an all but obsolete concept, thereby propelling maneuver warfare to the forefront of modern strategy. Amphibious operations with their inherent flexibility and mobility, when combined with maneuver strategy, provides the U.S. with a capability to respond to crises and conflicts throughout the world with reduced forces without significant degradation of it's warfighting capability.

Operational speed, tactical mobility, and the firepower of Marine combined arms would enable landing forces to attack along multiple axes, by air and surface while creating confusion, disrupting the enemy's planning, compounding his targeting problem, and denying him the opportunity to attack concentrated and relatively immobile forces.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The Marine Corps has all of the characteristics of an crisis response force, particularly in terms of balance and flexibility, strategic mobility, and it's sustainability and controllability. They maintain the unique capability to provide a balanced force of combined arms in a variety of crisis situations.

In a future where U.S. military power on the Eurasian continent is in recession and access to overseas bases and

support for forward-based forces is decreasing, the focus of the new national security strategy is on deterrence, forward presence, crisis response and reconstitution. The Marine Corps, with its capable, mobile, and logistically independent naval forces is organized with sufficient flexibility to enable them to provide the U.S. with a forward presence while maintaining the ability to respond to crises. If the need arises the U.S. Marine Corps, through their capabilities for forced entry operations and joint force sequencing can provide sufficient forces for sustained operations in a conflict situation.

III. SOVIET ANTILANDING DEFENSE

The new national security strategy has focused the Armed Forces on peacetime presence and contingency-type operations. While conventional war planners should be changing their focus from the "big" war to the regional contingencies, they must not lose sight of the possibility of conflicts against Soviet-trained enemies and the remote possibility of contingency operations against the USSR in a regional/local war. We must also examine Soviet doctrine in the unlikely event of the reconstitution of Soviet forces resulting in a big war with the Soviet Union, or whatever replaces it. It is for these reasons, however remote they might seem, that necessitates the examination of Soviet military doctrine.

Furthermore, the end of the cold war, and more recently the failed coup in Russia, has signaled a new era in not only United States military policy, but Soviet military policy as well. The political and economic implications of this new Soviet era is shifting the impetus of the Soviet military away from an offensive military strategy and towards a border, including maritime, defense military.

The Soviet military perceives that the military leadership of the United States and its allies in the NATO alliance has attached a special significance in joint actions by different

branches of the armed forces and supporting troops from sea axes.²⁹ They believe that the construction and modernization of amphibious naval forces and capabilities has taken on greater scope in U.S. and allied planning.

"Because of this perceived threat of coastal assault, the USSR Armed Forces continue to improve their ability and readiness to rebuff a sudden attack by the aggressor, including an attack from a sea axis, and to deliver crushing retaliatory blows with ground troops and naval forces working in close cooperation."³⁰

Antilanding defense has been taken seriously since World War II and has taken a more important role in Soviet doctrine since the mid-1980's. The determination of whether the Soviet military still maintains an emphasis on antilanding defenses requires the examination of Soviet forces, literature, and exercises to determine the intentions to employ their military forces in this particular manner. This chapter will examine the Soviet capability to defend against an amphibious assault through the analysis of the their defensive doctrine, the various branches of the Soviet military, and the coastal defense exercises conducted by Soviet forces to determine not only capabilities, but possible intentions.

²⁹ Admiral of the Fleet V. Chernavin. "Prepare Yourself for Modern Warfare" in Morskoy Sbornik. 1/89. pp. 3-8.

³⁰ Admiral K. Makarov. "Cooperation in Operations in Coastal Axes" in Morskoy Sbornik. 12/86. p. 23.

A. DEFENSIVE DOCTRINE

Both old and new Soviet military doctrine is replete with strategy on "defense of the homeland" which has always been considered the most important aspect of their military doctrine. Even if the USSR breaks up, whatever replaces it will still have a military and that military will be required to defend its homeland.

Defense is defined in the Soviet Military Dictionary as:

"a form of combat actions used to repulse an offensive by superior enemy forces, to screen certain axes, to economize on forces and resources on secondary axes, and to create a superiority over the enemy on the main axes. The essence of the defense consists of defeating enemy groupings as they advance and occupy an attack position, during an attack of the forward edge of defense, and in the course of combat actions to hold defensive lines."³¹

These definitions provide the general concept of defense as viewed by Soviet strategists.

The pre-coup, but "new" Soviet defensive doctrine calls for a "layered defense" posture requiring the enemy to advance through various stages of Soviet forces with increasing resistance as enemy forces approach Soviet territory.

The "combined arms" aspect of Soviet military doctrine, which parallels layered defense, is another theme that is extensively cited in Soviet defensive doctrine. The Soviets stress the use of "combined arms" or various arms of the military in association with each other. This affords a

³¹ K.L. Kushch-Zharko. Soviet Military Dictionary. Vol.5, 1983. pp. 660-665.

mutual support concept which enables the Soviets to employ the most effective and capable forces in a coordinated effort at a specific time and location.

The examination of "defense of the homeland" while providing for defense against enemy landings on Soviet soil is more concerned with the defense of the maritime coastline of the Soviet Ground Forces. This places a large responsibility on all branches of the Soviet military to be flexible, responsive and competent in the defense of the various coastlines.

B. ANTILANDING DEFENSE

The Soviet Military Dictionary defines antilanding defense as:

"defense of a coastal zone by ground forces in coordination with naval forces and aviation to prevent the landing of enemy amphibious and airborne parties."³²

Soviets are greatly concerned, in theory, about the threat to not only the front, but to theater forces as well, by a well-timed amphibious operation. While the Soviet Union downplays the likelihood of a major strategic-level amphibious assault on the coastline of the Soviet Union, they do differentiate and take seriously smaller tactical-level raids and the defense of the maritime flank of a supporting offensive or defensive operation which may be beyond or within

³² Ibid.

Soviet borders. The predominance of anti amphibious military and combat training/exercises deal with defense of the maritime flanks of operations.

Soviet antilanding defense is a multifaceted effort with success dependent on the coordination of forces and material which can be an extremely complex and painstaking matter for Soviet planners. According to the scale of antilanding defense, coordination of participating forces and means can be either at the operational or tactical levels.

The tactical organization is coordinated by the commander in charge of the coastal defenses among the forces available in the defensive area such as coastal artillery, naval air forces, and the coastal naval forces.

Operational coordination is organized among rocket weapons, formations of ground and air forces, and the navy, to serve the interest of these forces which can inflict the greatest losses on the landing forces at a particular time and place.

The General Staff would most likely subordinate amphibious defense to a coastal front or fleet depending on the perceived threat. The principal organizer of coordination would be the commander of the antilanding defense. He would assign tasks to combined-operating formations and units and determine the sequence and means of carrying them out, order the commitment of the troops, air forces, and naval vessels, the type of support, and other matters. The forces of the different

branches of the armed forces receive combat missions in accordance with combat capabilities, the expected composition of the enemy landing party, and the conditions in which the fighting against them is expected to occur. Responsibility of defense is divided geographically between front and fleet commanders with the boundary of ground operations extending approximately 150nm from the shore.

The first "layer" of the Soviet antilanding defense could be the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) which maintain the capability of striking the Amphibious Task Force in homeports, in transit, or in the Amphibious Operating Area with long-range (greater than 1000 km) nuclear missiles.

The Soviet military preserves the concept that an active offense at the tactical level is permissible under an overall defensive posture. Utilizing this concept the Soviet Air Force could also provide defensive strikes on the amphibious task forces with their long-range bombers. Bombers of the Soviet Air Force are capable of launching missile attacks on U.S. ports or on task forces in transit. Frontal aviation of the Soviet Air Force are tasked at the operational and tactical levels of war with achieving air superiority and providing air defense over the defensive area. Naval forces would be used to provide reconnaissance of enemy landing forces, destroy enemy naval forces at bases and at sea, deliver strikes against amphibious landing parties in homeport, during the sea crossing and in the landing region,

lay minefields on the approaches to sectors of coastline suitable for amphibious landings, help ground forces destroy landing parties already on shore through fire support, blockade coastal sectors seized by the enemy, and prevent evacuation of enemy troops. This indicates that opposition forces can conceivably expect Soviet defensive strikes by naval forces in homeports, during the task force transit, and as they approach Soviet territory with the level of resistance intensifying as the task force nears Soviet coastal waters.

In addition to naval forces, the Maritime Border Troops of the KGB are responsible for protecting the nation's maritime borders against penetration by paramilitary forces. These KGB maritime border troops have an army-style organization of approximately 12,000 personnel operating about 200 combat ships, patrol craft, and armed auxiliaries and a large number of light fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

The Soviets maintain the troops of air defense (PVO) who provide defense against attack from aircraft, missiles and satellites. They maintain aviation assets to intercept incoming hostile aircraft as far away as possible, rocket troops utilizing surface to air missiles for protection of air defense, and radar and communication systems to provide guidance and control of aircraft and missiles of the troops of the air defense.

Finally, ground forces are assigned to combat enemy nuclear weapons and aviation, destroy landing parties during

the landing, and hold occupied segments of coastline and islands. Coastal defense forces have been organized in each fleet.

This means that the first strike against the landing force even on distant approaches can be delivered by submarines, rocket-carrying aircraft, rocket weapons, bombers and fighter-bombers; and by artillery, tanks, and infantry weapons on near approaches. The Soviets also stress the need to maintain freedom of maneuverability and the capability to more effectively employ basic manpower and material in one or another area when delivering strikes.

The decisive strike is made where the most successful results can be achieved, where employment of the required number and composition of forces is possible, and at a time when enemy capabilities are considerably limited. Both operations and battles are organized according to definite boundaries, and each formation or unit is assigned tasks with the time of their execution. Signals, boundaries and the order of strikes by each unit are determined for the purpose of achieving a simultaneous general attack.

As the landing force approaches the area of debarkation, the intensity of fire on the assault forces will continually increase as it becomes possible to strike the landing troops with rocket weapons, and, in a correspondingly small radius of operations, with shore artillery and firepower of the ground troops.

The application of some of these arms and services to an anti-amphibious operation remains relatively similar to that of other defensive situations except for a significant departure from standard defensive operations in that defense against amphibious landing is a static defense while retaining the ability to launch a follow-on counterattack.

The experience of the World War II showed the Soviet strategists that the success of the defense depended on the concerted action of infantry, tanks and naval ships, as well as of aircraft prompting the combined arms aspect of defensive missions. Naval ships normally conduct reconnaissance and keep an eye on enemy movements by sea, deny the enemy the possibility to conduct reconnaissance, destroy enemy sea transports and amphibious landing craft with troops, attack his ships and lay mine fields along probable routes of the enemy. The air force flies reconnaissance missions in behalf of the ground troops, lays mines, destroys enemy airborne landing units, fighting ships, transport vessels and landing craft on the approaches to the shore and affords cover to the friendly forces in defense.

The overall task of the combined arms units in coastal defense is the destruction of enemy landing troops and equipment while they are reloaded from the transports to the landing craft, during the approach to the shore and during the actual landing or, in the event of a successful enemy landing, they are tasked with the destruction of enemy forces ashore.

C. SOVIET MILITARY ART

Soviet military art is a philosophy that must be understood to better grasp the Soviet concept of defensive operations. The Soviets identify three basic levels of Soviet military art: tactics, operational art, and strategic.

As defined in Christopher Donnelly's RED BANNER:

"Tactics is military activity at divisional level and below, either of combined arms or special-to-arm, including, in the Soviet definition, tactics specifically applicable to MVD and KGB troops."³³

The tactical level of conflict can therefore be classified as a battle (boy) involving a division or below level of command in a tactical direction.

Operational art is divided into three categories: operational-strategic; operational art; and operational-tactical and is defined by Donnelly as:

"...the theory and practice of preparing for, and conducting, combined arms (or fleet) combined or independent operations."³⁴

At the operational art level of conflict, the operational engagement would be conducted by a front, Army, or Corps in an operational direction.

Strategy, the highest branch of military art, is defined as:

"the theory and practice of preparing a country and its armed forces for war; the planning a conducting of

³³ Christopher Donnelly. Red Banner. Jane's Information Group LTD. 1986. pp. 218-220.

³⁴ Ibid.

strategic operations and of wars as a whole; and the study of war-fighting."³⁵

The strategic level of conflict would be the campaign, strategic battle (bitva), or strategic operation involving a "group of fronts" level of command in a theater of strategic military activity (TVD).

It must be noted that these terms of scale can also be applied to the mission rather than to the force deployed to execute the mission.

D. NAVAL FORCES

The bulk of recent literature on the Soviet Navy has focused on the Soviet Navy's "blue water" capabilities, or lack thereof, with little attention being given to their coastal defense capabilities which could conceivably play a significant role in Soviet defensive operations.

This section, while not attempting to underrate the Soviets open-ocean capability, will focus on the role the Soviet Navy with its various branches (Soviet Naval Infantry, coastal artillery and rockets, surface forces, subsurface forces, and aviation) would play in support of coastal defense and "defense of the homeland."

1. NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART

The preponderance of Soviet military doctrine pertains to the effectiveness of the ground forces and places the

³⁵ Ibid.

Soviet Navy in a position of supporting these ground forces. Soviet naval operational art establishes the broad missions of protection of maritime axes, straits, and chokepoints, the interdiction of sea lines of communication, strategic defense, and strategic offense. While the Soviet Navy maintains the capabilities for these missions, the new apparent intentions of the Soviet Navy is one of "Defense of the Homeland" with the bulk of their fleet remaining in coastal waters.

The Soviet Union devotes much of their naval strength to the protection of their coasts and to preventing any penetration of what they call the pre-coastal zone. Only China deploys more submarines, fast patrol vessels and aircraft in this role. A navy that maintains large numbers of vessels of this type can be assumed to attach considerable importance to coastal defense.³⁶

It is a well documented fact that all forces, including the naval forces of the four Soviet fleets must be prepared to defend the borders of the Soviet Union.

"Naval forces are used to carry on reconnaissance of enemy landing forces, destroy enemy naval forces at bases and at sea, deliver strikes against amphibious landing parties during the sea crossing and in the landing region, lay minefields on the approaches to sectors of coastline suitable for amphibious landings, help ground forces destroy landing parties already on shore, blockade coastal sectors seized by the enemy, and prevent evacuation of enemy troops."³⁷

³⁶ James Cable. "Coastal Defense: Britain's Achilles Heel?" in NAVY international. pp. 40-43. January 1984.

³⁷ Soviet Military Dictionary. Vol. 5, 1983. pp. 660-665.

This translates in Soviet naval operational art to coastal defense and support of the ground forces through the protection of the army's seaward flanks from attack by enemy naval and amphibious forces, and providing naval gunfire and logistics support of land operations. Soviet strategists further state:

"...the success of continental operations will apparently be affected not only by the naval forces supporting the army, but also by naval forces participating in the destruction of enemy combatants and vessels in independent operations at sea for the purpose of winning supremacy in a sea (or oceanic) theater of military operations or by naval units which create favorable conditions for actions of the fleet and to a significant extent support the success of the ground forces and other land-based forces cooperation with them."³⁸

Statements by Soviet strategists and military elite concerning the importance of coastal defense and support of the ground forces gave impetus to Soviet naval expansion with a focus on the development of surface and subsurface forces that could effectively counter threats in coastal regions.

"The Soviet Navy's assiduous development of small missile-firing warships like the Osa, Komar and, later, the Nanuchka and its continuing maintenance of large offshore defense forces shows that defending the Motherland against maritime attack remains a high priority."³⁹

Defense against amphibious assaults remains an important objective in Soviet operation art in conjunction

³⁸ B. Makayev, "Joint Operations of the Navy and Ground Forces, " Morskoy sbornik 4(1984):21-6.

³⁹ Ibid., 173.

with concurrent movements of strategies such as "bastion defense". The Soviet Navy has implemented an infrastructure of naval forces that is well suited to defeat enemy landings, attack hostile amphibious forces during ocean crossings, or help repel amphibious support operations in the defense of coastal regions and the support of ground forces along the maritime axes of the Soviet Union.

2. SUBSURFACE FORCES

While most attention on Soviet submarines has focused on ballistic missile submarines, the Soviets maintain a very large inventory (216) of both nuclear and diesel-electric powered cruise missile and torpedo-attack submarines.⁴⁰

Submarine ballistic missiles must be viewed as a potential weapon that could be used against the amphibious task force. The use of SLBM's against ports, amphibious groups in transit, and in the Amphibious Operations Area is an option that cannot be ruled out.

The large number of diesel-electric powered torpedo-attack and cruise missile submarines (110) would suggest that the interdiction of amphibious forces in the theater/coastal region would be a likely mission for the limited operational range of this class of submarines.⁴¹ The nuclear cruise

⁴⁰ Captain Richard Sharpe RN. editor. Jane's Fighting Ships 1991-92. Ninety-fourth Edition. Sentinel House, UK. Jane's Information Group. p. 582.

⁴¹ Ibid.

missile and torpedo-attack submarines would provide the Soviet Navy with the ability to interdict the amphibious forces in U.S. ports, during transit, such as Marine forces "swinging" from the Pacific to the Atlantic or enroute to Southwest Asia, in staging areas, or outside of the coastal/theater region.

Cruise missile and torpedo attack submarines are the primary general-purpose weapons of the Soviet Navy. They account for over 40 percent of all major Soviet combatants, and their offensive capabilities make them the greatest potential threat to Western battle groups, submarines, and sea lanes.

Soviet doctrine does not specifically address the role of the submarine in coastal defense other than the Navy will support the ground forces with whatever means available. The large number of diesel-electric submarines would suggest that these forces could be kept in coastal regions to support the ground forces either directly through cruise missile strikes in theater or indirectly through interdiction of amphibious forces. The ability of Soviet submarines to lay mines in maritime chokepoints and possible amphibious operating areas is well established and must be taken as a serious threat to the Amphibious Task Force.

3. NAVAL AVIATION

Soviet Naval Aviation (SNA), which has historically performed an insignificant part in Soviet Navy hierarchy, has

recently undergone a significant modernization program.⁴² While still remaining subordinate to the Navy, SNA has risen to the forefront of Soviet naval operational art through the increased capabilities, speed, and flexibility they can provide to the fleet and ground forces.

The majority of SNA aircraft are land-based with regiments assigned to each of the four fleets. Sea-based aircraft of the SNA are expanding with the acquisition of the Soviet aircraft carrier, yet still remain in their infancy period.

SNA is composed of over 1900 front line and training aircraft with over 90,000 officers and men.⁴³ They maintain in excess of 350 strike/bombers (Badger, Backfire, and Blinder) and 170 fighter/fighter-bombers (Fogger and Fitter).⁴⁴ The Soviets deploy 100 strike/bombers and fighter/fighter-bomber aircraft to the Northern Sea; 100 to the Baltic Sea; 150 to the Black Sea; and 170 to the Pacific Ocean.⁴⁵

Soviet Naval Aviation has developed an impressive force of sea- and land-based aircraft and helicopters with the

⁴² In 1990 and 1991 the Soviet Air Force transferred approximately 500 aircraft including Frogfoots, Floggers, and Fencers to naval air bases as part of the SNA modernization program. Jane's Fighting Ships 1991-1992.

⁴³ Jane's Fighting Ships 1991-1992. p. 582.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

ability to project Soviet power over broad oceanic expanses. The strike/bombers of SNA with combat radii exceeding 3,500 miles provide the means to strike the Amphibious Task Force at points in the Norwegian Sea or off the coast of Africa. The fighter/fighter-bombers with combat radii exceeding 200 miles provide the ability to provide air superiority and close air support for defensive forces.

Soviet Naval Aviation is tasked with five basic missions: reconnaissance and surveillance, anti-ship strike, anti-submarine, support, and more recently close air support. SNA provides one of the many layers of defense associated with Soviet defensive doctrine. They can provide an extended arm to intercept enemy forces as they enter coastal regions or provide close air support to offensive amphibious landings conducted by SNI in support of ground forces. The addition of Soviet aircraft carriers will enhance not only the capability of the SNA but extend the range of coastal defense.

The importance that the Soviet Navy has placed on naval aviation can be witnessed through the recent additions of modern aircraft to their forces providing substantial increases in SNA capabilities and range. The success of Soviet coastal defense operations will depend directly on SNA air support capabilities, and with the current modernization programs and the addition of aircraft carriers, Soviet Naval Aviation will provide the capability and flexibility to achieve that success.

4. SURFACE FORCES

The Soviet Navy maintains not only a large open ocean capable fleet, but maintains an exceptionally large coastal water fleet. The Soviet open-ocean fleet consists of aircraft carriers (5), cruisers (38), destroyers (29), and frigates (146).⁴⁶ The coastal forces of patrol combatants/craft include corvettes (76), missile craft (82), torpedo craft (32), patrol craft (192), and amphibious ships/crafts (78).⁴⁷ In addition, the Soviets maintain an internal waters fleet consisting of approximately 150 small craft.⁴⁸

The Soviet Navy has amassed a number of "large combatants" which can effectively extend the borders of Soviet territory through their increased range capability. The ability to intercept enemy forces at extended ranges or during transit provides an "extended coastal defense" by striking the enemy forces prior to their reaching the effective maximum range of their weapons or their amphibious operations area. This implies that the Amphibious Task Force could encounter Soviet surface resistance as far south as the Cape of Good Hope. Soviet surface forces therefore can support the layered defense that Soviet defensive doctrine emphasizes.

⁴⁶ The Military Balance 1991-1992. Published by Brassey's for the International Institute for Strategic Studies. London. 1991. p. 39.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

The large number of small combatants (missile, torpedo, patrol, and mine craft) that the Soviet Navy possesses would also play a major role in the layered defense of the Soviet homeland.

The mission of the Soviet Navy's small combatant forces is to provide reconnaissance, coastal security and to defend the maritime approaches to the Soviet Union. While their operations are limited to coastal areas due to their endurance and difficulties in heavy seas, the most important characteristic of the Soviet small combatants is the employment of highly lethal weapons on inexpensive, expendable platforms. Although production and manning require only a modest investment of naval resources, many of these Soviet boats are capable of destroying much larger and more valuable enemy warships and merchant vessels as demonstrated by the sinking of the Israeli destroyer Eilat in 1967 by an Egyptian-owned Osa missile patrol boat.⁴⁹ The Soviet small combatants are also capable of high speed maneuverability allowing them to attack and then retreat before defensive measures can be taken by enemy forces. The small size of these combatants also tends to make them harder to detect, particularly in coastal areas.⁵⁰ This was a lesson learned in World War II

⁴⁹ Bruce W. Watson and Susan M. Watson editors. The Soviet Navy. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 1986. p. 101-102.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

where small combat units worked well with aviation in a "hit and run" type role.

The Soviet Union has the longest coastline in the world, extending over 76,000 nautical miles or over twice that of the United States. To assist coastal forces in the defense of these vast coastal regions, the Soviet Navy maintains the largest mine warfare force in the world. They utilize over 135 ocean and coastal minewsweepers combined with approximately 260 minesweeping boats to make up their active force.⁵¹ When combined with the largest inventory of mines in the world these mine warfare ships can produce an effective obstacle to enemy forces in coastal regions, ports, or straits. The mine warfare force can also be used for additional tasks such as patrol and picket duties.

The Soviet Union maintains an impressive open-ocean navy, but the small combatants of the coastal defense forces present a formidable challenge to forces approaching the maritime flanks of the Soviet Union. The coastal defense forces of the Soviet surface navy provide numerous challenges to foreign navies and in light of their capabilities must be viewed as an integral and formidable branch of Soviet coastal defense.

⁵¹ Jane's Fighting Ships 1991-1992. p. 582.

5. SOVIET NAVAL INFANTRY

The Soviet Naval Infantry (SNI) is an elite combat force reformed in the 1960's to provide the Soviet Navy with the ability to conduct combat operations on maritime axes in the interests of the Navy as well as coastal elements of the ground forces.

The SNI has undergone a modernization program in recent years with an increase in amphibious lift capability such as the Ivan Rogov LPDs and air cushion vehicles. SNI is defined in Soviet literature as a light infantry, highly mechanized and highly capable force. They deploy two brigades with the Northern Fleet, one brigade with the Baltic Fleet, one brigade with the Black Sea Fleet, and a division with two regiments and supporting units with the Pacific Fleet.⁵²

The missions of the Soviet Naval Infantry are the defense of bases and other entities against air and amphibious assaults and participation with ground forces units in antilanding defense. They may also conduct amphibious assault landings in cooperation with ground forces on a limited and usually tactical basis.⁵³

It must be noted that SNI does not possess any organic air support and therefore are not designed to conduct extensive independent operations. The range of the SNI is

⁵² The Military Balance:1991-1992. p. 36.

⁵³ Major General I. Skuratov. "The Naval Infantry: Past and Present" in Morskly Sbornik No. 10, 1989, pp. 18-21.

currently limited to the range of land based aircraft necessary for their support.

Recent efforts by the Soviet Naval Infantry have been on the development of the capability for local amphibious operations in close support of the ground forces and the control of fleet exits from the Baltic and Black Seas and various other chokepoints.

Amphibious landings under SNI doctrine would be conducted to provide a quick rate of advance by forces in coastal areas, to launch attacks against the enemy's flanks and rear, to secure operational bases for Soviet forces, and to establish a more favorable tactical correlation of forces.⁵⁴ Amphibious landings are viewed as a possible method of shifting combat operations to enemy territory to promote the defeat of the enemy and to seize and hold enemy coastal areas until the arrival of the main body of Soviet forces.⁵⁵ Amphibious landings are also viewed as a means of counterattack should U.S. or enemy amphibious forces secure a foothold on Soviet territory. The importance of air support is emphasized in amphibious operations as being crucial to the survival of the assault forces.

The Soviet Naval Infantry is obviously not the U.S. Marine Corps, and in fact, rank only fifth or sixth in the

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

world among marine-type forces based on their manpower strength alone.⁵⁶ They do not have the capability to launch even an operational amphibious assault complete with organic air support as identified with the U.S. Marines. What the Soviet Naval Infantry does have is the manpower, armament, and capabilities to successfully execute missions in the interests of the various fleets and ground forces along the maritime axes. The SNI also maintains a viable amphibious assault capability compatible with tactical assaults and raids in support of ground forces along coastal regions.

The Soviet Naval Infantry was established to provide support to the fleet and ground forces through the defense of coastal regions. The capabilities of these forces are more than adequate for this purpose and, with the improvement and modernization of organic equipment and support activities, the Soviet Naval Infantry will continue to play a significant role in Soviet defensive doctrine and specifically the Soviet Union's coastal defense strategy.

6. COASTAL ARTILLERY AND MISSILE FORCES

The coastal artillery and missile branch of the Soviet navy has remained relatively obscure to Western analysts. Despite the lack of prestige that this branch of the Soviet

⁵⁶ Tritten, James John. "Soviet Amphibious, Mine, and Coastal-Patrol Forces" in The Soviet and Other Communist Navies: The View from the Mid-1980s, edited by James L. George. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press. 1986. p. 158.

Navy carries, the missiles and artillery of these troops would present a formidable force to the U.S. Amphibious Task Force in the amphibious operating area.

The coastal artillery and missiles branch of the Soviet Navy is a defensive only capable force consisting of over 14,000 troops divided among the four fleets and utilizing various artillery pieces and anti-ship missiles.⁵⁷ Anti-aircraft guns and missile units are also organic to every coastal missile and artillery battalion.

The coastal artillery and missile forces consist of three missile battalions in the Northern Sea; six battalions in the Baltic Sea; five battalions in the Black Sea; and five battalions in the Pacific Ocean fleet.⁵⁸ There are usually fifteen to eighteen missiles in each battalion utilizing an eight-wheeled Transport/Elevate/Launch (TEL) vehicle. These forces are not utilized to defend an entire coast, but to defend major ports or approaches to naval bases. The number of coastal artillery and missile battalions would indicate that these forces could conceivably defend at the most, two ports or bases in each of the four fleet areas.

The Soviet coastal artillery and missile forces are not a high profile organization but have been assigned the important role of protecting approaches to naval bases and

⁵⁷ Steven J. Zaloga, "Soviet Coastal Defense Missiles" in Jane's Soviet Intelligence Review. April 1989. pp. 167-172.

⁵⁸ The Military Balance 1991-1992. pp. 36-45.

major ports within the Soviet Union. Modernization of coastal defense missiles and artillery has been an ongoing process in the last decade. The Soviets are replacing outdated equipment with modern mobile equipment with capabilities far improved over previous versions. The modernization of the coastal artillery and missile forces with mobile artillery and missiles, when combined with existing fixed coastal defense sites will provide the Soviets with a much more flexible and viable defense force against enemies approaching the maritime flanks of the Soviet Union.

As Admiral Grishanov stated:

"The Soviet Navy's missile and artillery forces are equipped with up-to-date guided missiles, fully-automated fire control and guidance systems, long range artillery, sophisticated radar systems, etc. Their firepower, operational range and accuracy of fire ensure a reliable protection for the country's coastline and major military and industrial installations situated in coastal areas from an enemy seaborne attack as well as a reliable destruction of enemy forces well out to sea."⁵⁹

7. COASTAL DEFENSE TROOPS⁶⁰

The Coastal Defense Troops are a newly formed branch of the Soviet military composed of 20,000 troops divided into four motorized rifle divisions, one artillery brigade, and two artillery regiments. They possess 810 T-80 main battle tanks

⁵⁹ Bryan Ranft and Geoffrey Till. The Sea in Soviet Strategy. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press. 1989. p. 180.

⁶⁰ The Military Balance 1991-1992. pp. 36-45.

and 830 artillery pieces including both towed and self-propelled. The Coastal Defense Troops currently deploy one motorized rifle division and one artillery regiment to the Northern Fleet; one motorized rifle division and one artillery regiment to the Baltic Fleet; one motorized rifle division and one artillery brigade to the Black Sea Fleet, and one motorized rifle division to the Pacific fleet. It is important to note that the newly formed coastal defense troops employ the same main battle tank (T-80) as the Soviet ground forces while the Soviet Naval Infantry employs the older main battle tank (T-54). The number of troops and the modern equipment maintained by the recently established Coastal Defense Troops would suggest that they possess the potential for not only a defensive operations, but an offensive operations as well.

8. KGB TROOPS AND FLEET

The KGB maintains a force of Maritime Border Troops that are responsible for the protection of the nation's maritime borders. There are approximately 12,000 personnel assigned to the Maritime Border Troops and they maintain about 200 combat ships, patrol craft, and armed auxiliaries in addition to about a dozen supply ships.⁶¹ It must be acknowledged that riverine craft and flotillas are included in

⁶¹ Norman Polmar. Guide to the Soviet Navy. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press. 1986. p. 64-73.

the accounting of maritime forces of the KGB Maritime Border Troops.⁶²

The KGB ships are similar to those of the Soviet Navy except they possess reduced anti-air and anti-submarine capabilities in favor of heavier gun armaments. These ships have a significant combat capability and in wartime could certainly be used to supplement naval forces in combat operations much like the U.S. Coast Guard operates under Navy control in wartime. The KGB also operates a large number of light fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters which could be used for reconnaissance, surveillance, and targeting of amphibious forces off the coast of the Soviet Union.

E. TACTICAL AND TACTICAL-OPERATIONAL MISSILES⁶³

The tactical and tactical-operational missiles of the ground forces (FROG, SCUD, and SCARAB) provide yet another layer of antilanding defense. Soviet doctrine states that tactical and tactical operational missiles provide the basic firepower of the front against amphibious forces. The Soviets have carefully researched and developed tactics for the use of tactical and tactical-operational missiles against the ATF

⁶² "Soviet Amphibious, Mine, and Coastal-Patrol Forces" p. 166.

⁶³ Information collected for this section was compiled from various sources including: Soviet Antiamphibious Landing Defense, Morskoy Sbornik, Soviet Naval Digest, and Soviet Military Review.

threatening the flank of front offensive operations along a coastal axis.

In antilanding defense, tactical missiles are utilized primarily against AAV's and landing craft during both movement to the beach, and in the case of AAV's, subsequent operations ashore. They may also be used against heliborne elements of the landing force in helicopter landing zones. Tactical missiles are employed as the first line of defense close ashore at maximum range in coordination with barriers and mines.

Tactical-operational missiles can be used to deliver nuclear and chemical attacks against both transports and escorts ships in the AOA, as well as against landing forces during consolidation ashore. They are controlled by the front commander, are extremely flexible and can present a formidable challenge to the ATF.

F. GROUND FORCES

The Ground Forces provide the final layer in the defense of the Soviet Union or a maritime flank. The Soviet organization of the defense of a coast and certain tactical methods of operating to rebuff amphibious assaults differ radically from the preparation and conduct of battle in ordinary conditions. These differences result from the necessity to establish defenses on a wide frontage and usually

out of contact with the enemy. This makes reconnaissance a vital element of the defense network.

Soviet antilanding defense tactics have evolved from three basic doctrinal concepts for countering amphibious forces: (1) set up a well prepared deliberate defense as close to the shoreline as possible without unacceptably increasing vulnerability to prelanding nuclear or chemical strikes, (2) maintain the capability to employ a majority of combat power in rapid, mobile responses to unexpected breakthroughs or landings by the ATF, and (3) concentrate firepower during the debarkation and waterborne movement phases of the amphibious assault in an effort to repel the landing force before it can consolidate ashore.

As the ATF enters the amphibious operating area (AOA) the volume of air, naval, and missile attacks would increase, reaching maximum intensity during the debarkation of the landing force and its movement toward the landing beaches.

The defense of a maritime flank or sea coast requires the evaluation by ground forces of such factors as the availability of sectors in the defense area suitable for the landing of enemy amphibious forces, the possibilities for positioning coastal artillery elements, and missions for the destruction of an enemy amphibious force which can be accomplished in cooperation with naval ships. This implies a coordination of action by the motorized infantry elements with that of coastal artillery and naval ships.

The system of fire is so organized as to make maximum use of the range of the battalion fire means with the object of engaging the enemy landing force while it is approaching the beach, to achieve maximum density of fire at the shore line and to ensure reliable effect on the enemy if he manages to land. To make maximum use of the firepower, it is initially located as close to the waterfront as possible.

Main attention is paid to holding important objectives in the landing-threatened direction. This requires special attention to coordinating with the representatives of the fleet the method of mutual identification, target designation, and exchange of information according to the general maps; determines places for signalmen and spotters from the cooperating ships.

If the enemy manages to land and penetrate the defenses, the artillery battalion fires to stop the advance inland and towards the flanks, prevents the landing of other echelons and prepares to give support to a counterattack of the second echelon (reserve) of the combined-arms unit.

Ground forces also cannot rule out the possibility of the enemy dropping an airborne force and saboteur and reconnaissance parties behind defensive lines. The accounting for the possibility of fleets to deliver air strikes and to parachute troops into the defense area dictates that all organic equipment and attached weapons of the antiaircraft defense be prepared to repulse enemy air attacks. Positions

for antiaircraft weapons are therefore chosen on the terrain so as to ensure maximum cover from air attacks for the battalions main forces.

1. MOTORIZED RIFLE UNITS⁶⁴

The motorized rifle units are the principal ground combat elements which would defend coastal areas against an amphibious task force. Antilanding doctrine emphasizes a well prepared static defense at the regiment and battalion level for the destruction of amphibious landing forces before they can consolidate ashore or preferably while still at sea.

While the motorized rifle regiment (MRR) appears to be the largest unit which would assume a static defense posture under normal conditions, the basic tactical unit employed in an antilanding operation is the motorized rifle battalion (MRB), which normally operates as a part of a motorized rifle regiment (MRR).

If the MRR was utilized for defense, a motorized rifle division (MRD) commander would employ one of the three MRR's in a deliberate defense on the most likely approach of an amphibious assault, holding the remaining two MRR's and a tank regiment as a reserve configuration should the landing force break through the defending MRR or execute an unexpected landing elsewhere.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

The MRR contains organic motorized rifle, tank, artillery, air defense, engineer, signal, chemical, and other necessary elements to make it an organization capable of functioning under nuclear and non-nuclear conditions. It is 100% mobile and equipped with a sufficient amount of infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers and other transports to carry all personnel and equipment of the unit.

The basic combat elements of an MRR are three MRB's and a tank battalion. Principle organic combat support elements include a 122mm howitzer battalion, an air defense and an antitank guided missile battery, a reconnaissance and an engineer company. Additionally, an MRR deployed in a static antilanding defense will most likely be reinforced with two or three artillery batteries attached from higher headquarters to form a regimental artillery group (RAG).

Soviet defensive doctrine calls for the deployment of defenses in either one or two echelons. The regiment will normally deploy in two echelons with two MRB's forward while maintaining an MRB in reserve. If the defended beach is flat and easy for landing forces to cross or the MRB's assigned frontage is two to four kilometers, each first echelon MRB will deploy in two echelons with two motorized rifle company's (MRC's) forward and an MRC in reserve. The strong points of the forward companies would be located approximately two kilometers from the waters edge.

If the first echelon strong points of the MRB main defense area are located farther inland than 400 to 500 meters from the water, or there are suitable offshore islands, a reserve platoon is normally employed as a combat guard (outpost) forward of the main defense area. The mission of the combat guard is to employ antitank weapons, including ATGM's, to deceive the landing force in terms of concealing the location of the forward edge of the defense area and preventing assault amphibian vehicles (AAV) and landing craft from breaching mine and obstacle barriers. When located on the beach, the combat guard is placed as close to the water as possible.

A steep beach which is difficult for the landing force to cross or an assigned frontage of four or more kilometers may be defended by a battalion in a single echelon. If the situation dictates a single echelon defense, the Soviets deploy two MRCs, with an attached tank platoon, on the assault line and one MRC located on the flank of the least likely avenue for the main assault. An MRP from the MRC, along with an antitank and an engineer detachment, acts as the battalion reserve. This reserve allows the MRB commander some initiative in stopping minor penetrations of the battalion defense area, but most breakthroughs by the landing force would be countered by the MRRs reserve.

Because the MRC strong points are deployed as close to the water as possible in a single echelon defense, a combat

guard is not normally posted, unless there are suitable offshore islands. Instead, two or three specially designated antitank weapon teams within the main defense area initially cover mine and obstacle barriers to prevent premature exposure of the entire MRB fire system to the ATF.

Artillery, firing from temporary positions forward of the first echelon MRCs in a two echelon defense, or just behind the company strongpoints in a single echelon defense, would engage AAVs, landing craft, and fire support ships at maximum range, "walking" preplanned firing missions towards the beach at set time intervals.

The combat guard would engage the first wave of AAVs at maximum range, covering the withdrawal of the artillery units to the normal firing positions within the MRBs main defense area. Combat guard weapons would also concentrate on AAVs which had succeeded in penetrating antilanding barriers as well as landing vehicles and craft carrying combat engineer elements and obstacle breaching devices. Once it became apparent that the combat guard was not able to repel the landing, it would withdraw along the flanks of the battalion under cover of protective fire from the company strong points while antitank weapons, mortars, and tank/IFV main guns would replace the combat guard weapons as the primary sources of defensive fire.

As the landing force approached small arms range, the intensity of defensive fire would gradually increase to

maximum intensity defensive fire at around 400 meters forward of the first echelon strong points. The point of maximum intensity defensive fire is predetermined to correspond at the point where the landing force encounters the extensive mine and obstacle barriers employed by the engineering units. If the landing force penetrates this barrier and the covering fire, and is advancing its attack toward inland objectives, the companies continue to fight as pockets of resistance while awaiting a counterattack from the MRR reserve. The MRR reserve is characteristically positioned 12 to 15 km from the forward edge of the main defense area and normally launches a counterattack against a penetrating landing force from a line of deployment 4 to 6 kilometers from the shoreline, usually about 30-40 minutes after the landing force has landed or when it has advanced between 1.5 and 3 kilometers inland. This tactic allows the use of a strong mobile reserve to create fire pockets between the forward strong points and the ability to contain the landing force from the flanks and front in order to either destroy it or force a withdrawal. The MRB reserve could be used for minor penetrations into the landing force, but its major role in antilanding defense appears to be the neutralization of heliborne assaults against the depth of the battalions main defense area. (FIGURE 4)

FIGURE 4
SOVIET ANTILANDING
DEFENSE DIAGRAM

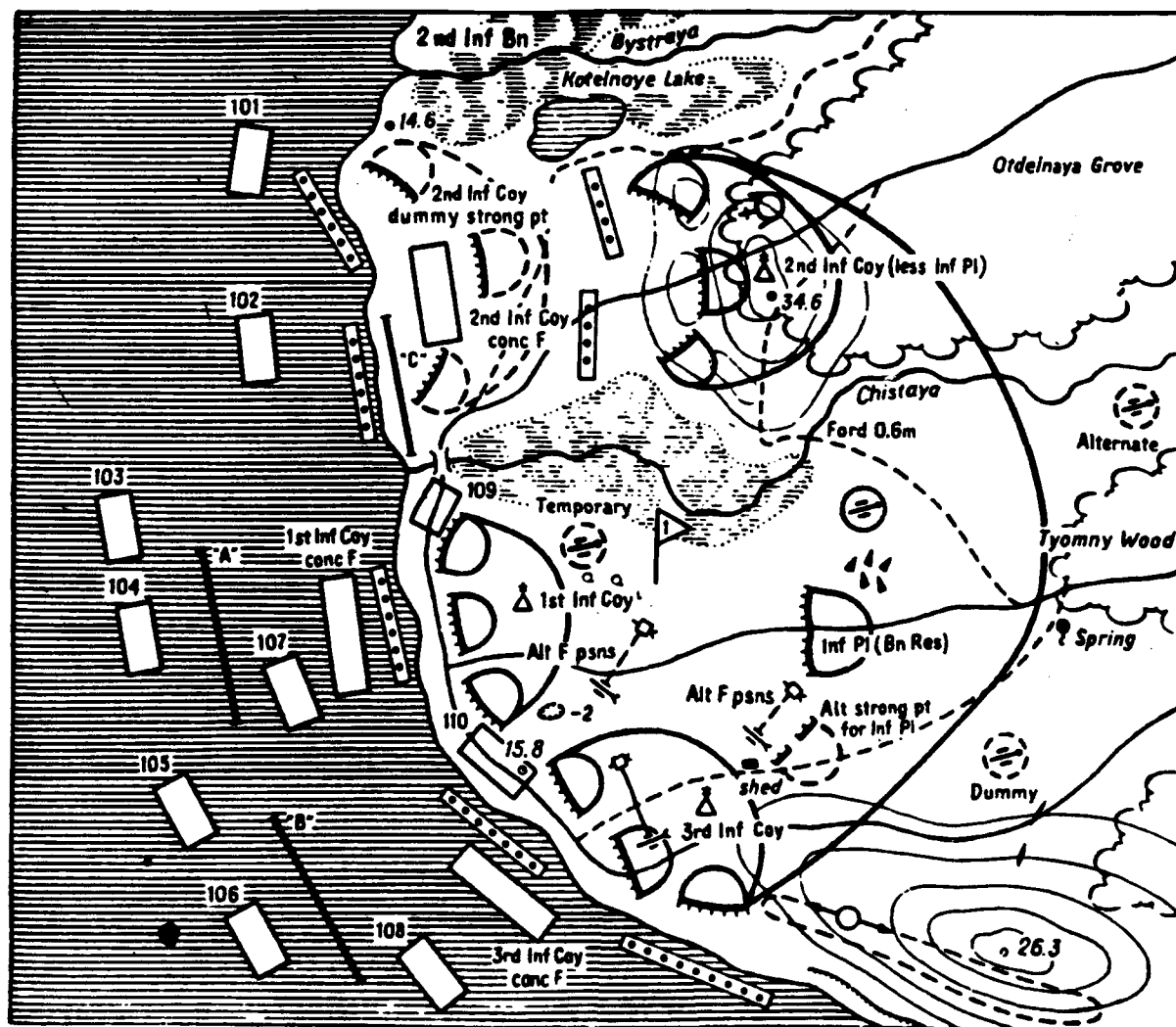


Figure 4 depicts a two echelon defense posture identifying the three infantry companies with their concentrated fire points and alternate firing positions. It also identifies reserves, artillery positions, minefields and dummy positions.

SOURCE: SOVIET MILITARY REVIEW

2. TANKS⁶⁵

The Soviets consider a reinforced tank battalion to be capable of defending a coastal area up to 5 kilometers wide and 2 kilometers deep. The reinforcement of the battalion is normally accomplished by the attachment of an motorized rifle company, an artillery battalion, and an engineer platoon.

The battalion usually establishes a single-echelon static defense approximately 2 and 3 kilometers from the waterline. The battalion reserve for this type of defense would consist of a tank platoon, detached from one of the companies, and a motorized rifle platoon from the attached MRC. Initially, the reserve units form a combat guard (outpost) at the waterline to engage the landing force at the maximum range of their direct fire weapons and act as a security force for the attached artillery battalion while it is deployed in temporary firing positions forward of the tank battalions forward edge of battle area.

Reconnaissance once again ascertains the likely amphibious approaches, probable objectives of the landing force, and the force size each beach can accommodate. Company strongpoints along with temporary, main, and alternate positions are determined and assigned for the reserve and the attached artillery battalion based on this reconnaissance.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Upon arrival of the ATF in the AOA, the artillery battalion in support of the tank battalion begins firing from temporary positions in an effort to destroy as much of the landing force as possible while in the water. The combat guard engages the landing craft at maximum effective range, attempting to repulse the attack/assault, deceive the ATF as to the actual location of the forward edge of battle (FEBA), and inflict heavy casualties without prematurely exposing the battalions fire plan to opposition air and naval gunfire attacks. While the combat guard engages the landing force, the artillery battalion withdraws to the main firing positions utilizing pre-planned rolling barrages as the landing force moves toward the beach.

If the artillery and combat guard have accounted for a substantial loss of landing force strength, tank companies would move forward out of their strongpoints to within 50 to 100 meters of the waterline to conduct direct fire from the tank main guns to stop the assault in the water. If the landing force maintains the ability to reach the beach, the combat guard is withdrawn under the cover of intense fire from company strongpoints and the battalion commences maximum intensity defense fire with tank main guns and an artillery standing barrage as the first wave of AAVs comes ashore.

As the landing force prosecutes its assault inland, the motorized rifle platoons move to prepared security positions inside the tank company strongpoints to provide

protection to the tanks and await a counterattack from the tank regiments reserve.

The regimental reserve normally launches the first counterattack approximately 6 kilometers from the waterline when leading elements of the landing force have advanced 2 to 3 kilometers inland. During the counterattack, the tank company strongpoints attempt to create crossfire pockets to pin down the landing force and prevent it from maneuvering against the regimental reserve. The tank battalion reserve could be used to counter a weak penetration, although the primary role of this reserve appears to be the neutralization of helicopter assaults on objectives within the battalions defense area.

3. ARTILLERY⁶⁶

Soviet tactics for the employment of field artillery in antilanding defense emphasizes three major principles. The first principle stresses the engagement of the afloat elements of the ATF at maximum effective range in an effort to destroy as much of the landing force while still at sea. The Soviets have determined that with concentrated fire of an artillery battalion it is possible to destroy a transport or landing craft carrying an infantry battalion with its tanks while still at sea, but the destruction of an infantry battalion

⁶⁶ Ibid.

with weapons after it has landed would require three times as many artillery pieces and ammunition.

The second principle utilizes the extensive use of detailed, pre-planned fires calculated in advance by all batteries in the battalion assigned to defend a specific avenue of approach, as well as those batteries located in adjacent areas within range of the approach. Therefore, if the battalion assigned to defend a specified avenue of approach is disabled or destroyed, the adjacent battalion having already calculated the firing data for that specific avenue of approach is capable of immediately delivering the line of fire. Finally, Soviet doctrine utilizes redundant radio, wire, and visual communication paths for their coded fire commands to ensure responsiveness of orders while decreasing the vulnerability of command and control to communications disruption.

When defending a sea coast an artillery battalion is usually provided with radar. The position of the radar station is chosen so as to ensure reconnaissance and fire adjustment at maximum firing range and to observe the waterline and coastal zone.

Firing positions are chosen according to the characteristics of the various artillery pieces and their targets. The first positions that the firing batteries occupy are temporary positions located as close to the waterline as possible. This allows for the engagement of the amphibious

task force ships at maximum range. Additionally, these forward positions allow the artillery units to take early action to prevent reconnaissance and minesweeping by amphibious forces. Batteries firing from temporary position conduct concentrated fire at ships within range as well as the AAVs and landing craft in assembly areas or on the line of departure.

As the AAVs/landing craft approach the line of departure and prepare to commence the assault, the battalion shifts in echelon to its main firing position, located within the depth of the defensive position. The Soviets coordinate the artillery barrages with the arrival of AAVs and landing craft at reefs, mines and other obstacles due to the relatively light overhead protection of these craft in comparison with infantry fighting vehicles designed for ground combat. Once the landing force has succeeded in penetrating this rolling barrage and the maximum intensity fire of the supported MRB or tank units, the artillery battalion fires a standing barrage at the waterline.

If the landing force begins to consolidate a foothold ashore, the artillery units withdraw to alternate positions towards the rear and continue to fire harassment missions throughout the depth of the beachhead. In preparation for a counterattack, supporting artillery conduct fire assaults along the line of attack while heavy guns simultaneously engage gunfire support ships of the ATF, which provide one of

the primary dangers to the counterattacking forces. If Soviets fail the initial counterattack, artillery units fire standing barrages to the front and flanks of the landing force, to prevent pursuit of the counterattack force and a further expansion of the beachhead by the landing forces.

4. ENGINEER SUPPORT⁶⁷

Engineer support is an integral part of the antilanding defense and is particularly stressed in Soviet doctrine. Engineer forces are organic to the Soviet ground force structure and are often supported by naval engineer forces that specialize in antilanding operations. These engineer units are flexible, multimission capable, combat support units consisting of a pontoon bridge company, a combat engineer company, and amphibious company and a construction company. They are equipped with a wide variety of engineering equipment including tracked minelaying vehicles (MAV/BAV or K-61/PTS), bulldozers and high speed trenchers and ditchers.

These engineer units conduct the initial functions necessary to ensure the rapid construction of fortifications, caves and tunnels for fire weapons and combat equipment. They also organize the installation of barriers and obstacles on the probable landing zones of the enemy both in the water and directly ashore.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

After a specific antilanding defense mission has been assigned engineer reconnaissance elements will perform reconnaissance to develop specific information for the assigned defense area. Upon completion of this reconnaissance, the plan for the engineer preparation of the antilanding defenses is formulated placing first priority on protective entrenchments and shelters followed by mine and obstacle barriers. If time permits, improvements to approach and withdrawal routes are made to facilitate rapid reinforcement and enhance the capability to withdraw and reoccupy the defensive position if the use of NBC during prelanding bombardment is suspected.

5. ENTRENCHMENTS AND SHELTERS⁶⁸

Entrenchments and shelters are the first priority of the defensive forces and are an integral part of the antilanding doctrine at both the tactical and operational level of military art.

Soviet doctrine utilizes trenches, pits, shelters, and firing ports for equipment, weapons, and personnel to provide some degree of overhead cover and concealment during air and naval gunfire bombardment and NBC strikes. These structures are further reinforced if possible with timber, corrugated steel, and sandbags to enhance overhead protection during shore bombardment. Trenches are also utilized to link squad

⁶⁸ Ibid.

positions within company strong points and as communication trenches between platoons and observation command posts.

Trenches are created using high-speed trenching machines or tank dosers (BTM-3 or MDK). The Soviets also stress the maximum use of power tools and explosives to minimize the time required to accomplish the improvements.

Camouflage discipline at both the tactical and operational level of military art is thorough and continuous throughout the defensive area.

6. BARRIERS⁶⁹

The Soviets regard engineer preparation of the defense area as a key factor in the antilanding defense plan and rely on barriers to account for heavy casualties and also function as distractions to prevent landing force AAV drivers and assault troops from avoiding covering fire. The system of antilanding, antitank and antipersonnel engineering barriers and obstacles on the approaches to the shore are designed to handicap the maneuver of the landing force both on the approaches to the landing beach and on it. They are built in such a way so as to ensure the covering of the main areas of the shore suitable for landing an amphibious force and of the probable directions of the enemy advance upon landing. The obstacles are carefully coordinated with a system of fire and the routes of maneuver and advance of the units in defense.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

The Soviets utilize two types of barriers: mines, which are preferred, and obstacles.

Up to 1200 antitank mines may be laid for a battalion-sized defense in minefields designed to channel AAVs into zones of intensive antitank fire and to cover gaps between the combat guard temporary positions. The Soviets stress the use of hedgehogs, reinforced concrete blocks, knife teeth, and protective and deceptive barbed wire be integrated with the mines to increase resistance to determined penetration efforts. They emphasize secured, weighted foundations to prevent movement in surf and during tidal shifts and are acutely aware of the vulnerability of obstacles to underwater nuclear demolitions, and therefore attempt to design and construct obstacles difficult to counter. Additional deceptive and defensive wire obstacles are placed throughout the defensive zone to thwart helicopter assault in potential landing zones.

Construction of these defenses requires an extended period of time, usually two to five days, yet Soviet exercises and doctrinal literature rarely considers more than a 48 hours of warning for an antilanding defense mission. Writings further reveal that the Soviets expect eight to 24 hours of prelanding bombardment preparation before the landing forces move ashore and perhaps even more given the recent Desert Storm air campaign.

The lack of advanced strategic or operational warning of an amphibious assault would require a hasty antilanding defense preparation which in Soviet doctrine calls for the construction of unconnected and uncovered positions with few obstacles and sparse minefields located on the most likely avenues of approach.

G. CONCLUSIONS

Soviet military literature emphasizes the role of ground forces in coastal defense and defense of the maritime flank. Ground forces train for coastal defense and maintain forces organic to the division that are capable of conducting coastal defense.

The combined arms aspect of Soviet doctrine is also stressed with the total integration of all branches of the Soviet military. The Soviet military commands a formidable coastal defense force that is second to none. The emphasis put forth in doctrinal writings and the modernization of the extensive coastal forces corroborates the "defensive" posture taken by the Soviet Union. Coastal defense and "defense of the homeland" are integral parts of the Soviet military and political "defensive" doctrine and will continue to be so in the future.

While the future of the Soviet military in light of recent developments within the Soviet Union is obscure, the capabilities of existing Soviet ground and naval forces are

more apparent. Command and control for antilanding defenses appears to be moving away from the old military district structuring and towards a republic structure where forces could either be owned by the republic or the union/commonwealth. Regardless of what direction Soviet political or military doctrine might take, the Soviet military might will remain as a powerful force capable of providing a viable and effective means of "Defending the Homeland."

Finally, the Soviet Union's military advisory potential can not be ignored as it is important to note that the Soviet employment of antilanding defenses is the basic concept witnessed by U.S. amphibious forces in Iraq/Kuwait. This emphasizes the necessity for U.S. strategic planners to still study Soviet antilanding doctrine in order to be better prepared to respond to the various contingencies as outlined under the new national security strategy.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental role of America's armed forces is changing. In an era where the United States military power is declining on the Eurasian continent and where access to overseas bases and the support for forward-based forces is decreasing, the new national security strategy is focused on deterrence, forward presence, crisis response and reconstitution.

The perpetuation of a stable world environment through a credible military force and strong alliances will continue to remain crucial to the survival of our Nation and our political and economic well-being. To remain credible while enduring a dwindling military budget necessitates a national strategy that must be joint in nature and which requires a force capability applicable across the broad spectrum of conflict. The velocity with which political situations are changing in the world today, as witnessed in the Iraq/Kuwait conflict, requires a force structure that is able to respond to this broad spectrum of crises anywhere at anytime with little or no warning.

The force structure and the means by which the U.S. accomplishes these new security goals is already changing and will require the development of a military strategy with a

force structure that is responsive to today's dynamic political situation. While there is no precise model to optimize force structure, forces must be multimission, mobile, flexible, and capable of the precise and discriminate application of military force.

Amphibious forces by virtue of their mobility, flexibility and versatility, and with the ability to conduct both tactical and operational level assaults from the seaward flank, are a vital component of our maritime capability and new national security strategy. They can respond to the complete range of scenarios from forward presence to crisis response and finally, to sustained conflict. Military planners must not ignore the fact that the threat of amphibious operations can also cause an adversary to deploy forces in a manner that leaves him vulnerable in other locations and to other types of military operations as witnessed during Desert Storm. Amphibious forces are often the best, and sometimes the only, way of responding with military force to an unstable or potentially unstable situation. As such, amphibious operations should remain as an integral part of our maritime strategy especially with their ability to exploit sea control.

The Marine Corps has all of the characteristics of an intervention force, in terms of balance, flexibility, strategic mobility, and sustainability and is moving to meet the future force requirements of the new national security strategy.

The Marine Corps, with its capable, mobile, and logistically independent naval forces is organized with sufficient flexibility to enable them to provide the U.S. with a forward presence while maintaining the ability to respond to crises. If the need arises the U.S. Marine Corps, through their capabilities for forced entry operations and joint force sequencing can provide sufficient forces for sustained operations in a conflict situation.

The Marine Corps has developed a force structure that maximizes their fighting capabilities through the concepts of Marine-Air Ground Task Forces and sequencing while still addressing the current force level cuts and the new national security strategy.

The U.S. Marine Corps amphibious forces maintain the ability to be in theater during a crisis to suppress possible escalation of hostilities. If the situation deteriorates amphibious forces can exhibit U.S. conviction to deter further escalation and failing all else they can provide a "foothold" for the sequencing of follow-on forces if the situation results in a major confrontation requiring a greater American response. Sequencing provides the National Command Authority with the capability to respond to crises with a small, capable force and, if the situation necessitates, maintain the ability to secure air bases, ports, or safe zones for the augmentation of heavier follow-on forces.

In light of the changing threat and the reduction of forces across the board, the U.S. is already reducing those forces focused on the Soviet threat. The era of focusing the majority of U.S. defense efforts on a single threat or in a single region of the world is no longer considered a viable option. While this is warranted and necessary, we must cautiously, however, still assess both Soviet military capabilities and political intentions before making any major course changes in our own maritime programs. To maintain a credible military the U.S. must not be so nearsighted as to ignore the significant force and advisory potential maintained by the Soviets.

It is evident through the examination of Soviet military literature, exercises, and hardware that the Soviet Union takes coastal defense seriously. The emphasis put forth in doctrinal writings and the recent modernization of the extensive coastal forces corroborates the "defensive" posture taken by the Soviet Union with coastal defense and "defense of the homeland" remaining as integral parts of the Soviet military and political "defensive" doctrine and will continue to be so in the future. While the future of the Soviet military in light of recent developments within the Soviet Union is unknown, the capabilities of existing Soviet ground and naval forces are quite apparent. The Soviet military commands a formidable coastal defense force that is second to none.

The Soviet Union's military advisory potential can not be ignored as it is important to note that the Soviet employment of antilanding defenses is the basic concept witnessed by U.S. amphibious forces in Iraq/Kuwait. This emphasizes the necessity for U.S. strategic planners to continue their analysis of Soviet antilanding doctrine in order to be better prepared to respond to the various contingencies as outlined under the new national security strategy.

It is through the study and analysis of foreign militaries that U.S. strategic planners are able to determine the capabilities and weaknesses of not only U.S. forces, but foreign forces as well. The examination of Soviet antilanding doctrine provides the U.S. with a viable benchmark with which to assess our capabilities.

It is obvious through the examination of the Soviet antilanding doctrine that many of the basic conditions for a traditional amphibious assault may no longer be attainable on today's modern battlefield. The presence of mechanized, highly mobile enemy ground forces, high tech smart weapons, and the ability to achieve air and naval superiority in theater would enable enemy defenses to prevent the traditional build-up of combat power ashore or destroy the force prior to the breaking out of the beachhead.

Given today's surveillance capacity, there is also little probability that an amphibious task force will achieve strategic surprise, although operational and tactical surprise

could be achieved through feints, maneuver, or over-the-horizon assaults.

The modern battlefield dictates that future amphibious operations will be more dependent on the use of deception, real-time intelligence, and the over-the-horizon (OTH) capability to succeed. This requires amphibious forces that are designed to land with higher speed, from greater distances, and from dispersed fleet formations. Over-the-horizon capability creates problems for defending forces by making potential landing zones difficult to anticipate and defend, thereby increasing the ability to achieve both tactical and operational surprise. Amphibious forces could, with over-the-horizon capabilities, become true practitioners of maneuver warfare.

The continued development of an amphibious over-the-horizon assault capability is crucial due to the threat to traditional Navy/Marine forces posed by naval mines, precision-guided munitions, and weapons of mass destruction. The use of naval mines and antiship missiles in the Persian Gulf demonstrated that Third World military forces now possess the technology to confront larger and more modern forces. While these obstacles are not insurmountable, they necessitate changes in current amphibious warfare doctrine, training, and equipment.

When considering how the United States will respond to any overseas crisis, it is important to take into account the

posture of its forces. Forces must be well-positioned geographically if they are to react promptly to crises and, if necessary, other forces must be capable of rapidly reinforcing them.

Amphibious forces will remain one of the major means of crisis response with its integrated U.S. air-ground warfare capability ashore, especially where conditions preclude timely entry of Army and Air Force units. Military opposition to the landing of amphibious forces will vary widely as to intensity and sophistication dependent on the area of crisis.

The ability of amphibious forces to respond to a rapidly developing contingency could be limited to the forward element of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade. The capabilities of this size amphibious force, although limited, would exhort the concept of sequencing where once a beachhead or airfield have been secured, the landing force could be reinforced rapidly by similar units using airlift and maritime prepositioning ships or through Army or Air Force airborne forces.

This is not to suggest that airborne forces by themselves are the answer to a forcible entry situation that an amphibious force can not handle. Airborne forces, by the nature of their design for speed of deployment and surprise, are configured to be somewhat lighter than amphibious forces. They are also not backed up by the naval air and gunfire support inherent in an amphibious operation, and their

capability for both ground mobility and sustainment is limited.

Despite the difficulty inherent in a combined amphibious-airborne operation, the joint employment of amphibious and airborne forces could enhance not only the size of forces available to conduct a short notice operation, but the capabilities as well. In an era when all services espouse the need for joint operations, the focus of future contingency operations should be on combined forces operations. Joint operations in a crisis response role provides military planners the ability to fully exploit the unique capabilities of each and every armed force.

Military doctrine and theory is evolutionary, sometime revolutionary, and constantly undergoing change to accommodate new ideas, new technology, or to counter changing threats. It is, therefore, not surprising to find or expect significant modifications to military doctrine and theory in view of the President Bush's Aspen speech.

Geography and the dynamic international political climate substantiate the necessity for a strategy that is maritime in nature. Naval forces have responded to over seventy-five percent of all international crises since World War II. The Navy/Marine Corps Team can provide the Unified Commanders with a force module that can be built utilizing a variety of deployment methods depending upon the situation.

Amphibious forces provide U.S. decisionmakers with considerable flexibility when facing unexpected crises. They are able to move unimpeded on the high seas without regard for overflight rights, landing rights, or forward basing. During crisis response, peacetime presence forces can loiter off the coast of an opposing nation in international waters for extended periods of time. The ability of maintaining an amphibious task force off the coast of a crisis region is an inherent characteristic of naval power projection.

From their offshore position, amphibious forces can demonstrate "gunboat diplomacy" by intimidation, the manifestation of which can be implied by merely assuming an offensive posture at sea. It must also be noted that the presence of naval forces can be used as a means of influencing friendly nations through the same concept of "gunboat diplomacy."

Finally, amphibious forces can provide a limited forced-entry capability to facilitate the sequencing of follow-on forces into theater or, if deemed necessary, amphibious forces can be easily retracted from the crisis region.

Strategic planners must have the foresight to respond to the changing military balance not only in Europe, but throughout the world and its littorals. Regardless of the frequency and scale of possible amphibious operations, military planners must be prepared for anti-amphibious warfare. The analysis of Soviet antilanding literature,

military forces and equipment, and Soviet antilanding exercises provides strategic planners with a benchmark from which to examine our own amphibious forces. While the focus of the new national security strategy is moving away from the Soviet Union, the need to study Soviet antilanding doctrine is merited due to the possibility of U.S. forces encountering Soviet-trained enemies or the remote possibility of contingency operations against the USSR in regional/local wars. Finally, it is necessary for U.S. strategic planners to continuously track Soviet antilanding concepts in the unlikely event of a reconstitution scenario resulting in a big war with the USSR or whatever replaces it.

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